# Gay Holidays on Inland Waterways

by G.B.

2000 miles Cruising by Motor-Boat Pleasure Skiff.

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To Mrs Pickett

With every good wish

From

Felix Boothroyd

1926. Hadlow Road.

# REVIEWS

*Lloyd's List,* March 31, 1917.

*My Holidays on Inland Waterways,* by Mr. P. Bonthron, a member of the British Motor Boat Club, as may be inferred from its title, treats of the canals from the lighter point of view, and is just the sort of volume likely to attract the eye of the general reader.

*The Captain,* June, 1917.

The facts imparted will be useful to the increasing number of readers who are attracted to a holiday on the water. . . . Their cruises were by no means without adventure and hard work, and on the Wye, where their boat began to take water, they had some exciting moments.

*The Queen,* June, 1917.

Mr. Bonthron's book is exactly what might be expected from an expert waterman.

*Truth,* September 12, 1917.

. . . giving useful details for the guidance of all who are inclined to make similar excursions.

*The Richmond and Twickenham Times,* September 22, 1917.

Synchronising with the renewed discussion on British inland waterways and the boating season, now in full swing, is the appearance of a second edition of *My Holidays on Inland Waterways* (T. Murby and Co.). This book gives an account of 2,000 miles cruising by motor boat and pleasure skiff on the canals and rivers of this country, and makes pleasant holiday reading.

*Bedfordshire Standard,* September 28, 1917.

His delightful descriptions of holiday trips. . . .

*Newcastle Daily Chronicle,* October 31, 1917.

Many may be stimulated to copy his form of holiday-making. They will find all the necessary guidance in this volume. But whether those who take up the book desire to go a-boating or not, they will see that it is remarkably topical.

*The Fishing Gazette,* December 1, 1917.

It affords, if not information about angling, at least abundance of hints as to likely places—places worth inquiring about by anglers looking out for new fishing grounds and waters.

*Leeds Mercury,* December 28, 1917.

Our canals may come into their own . . . . it is a pleasant thought, and its possibility of realisation is backed up by the experience of Mr. P. Bonthron, who has written a book on his many canal cruises. He says he enjoyed himself, and no one who sees the photographs that he took and that are reproduced in this book can doubt it.

*Financial News,* January 2, 1918.

These journeys offer very attractive modes of brief, but effective, rejuvenation. . . . He has travelled over practically every inland waterway on these islands.

*Tonbridge Free Press,* January 11, 1918.

A very entertaining volume was published by Mr. P. Bonthron in 1916 describing a holiday trip by motor boat and skiff over the canal system of a large part of England. . . . We are not surprised that it has gone into a second edition.

*Daily Graphic,* July 13, 1918.

The whole book, with its numerous illustrations and map, is a delightful and most useful guide to others who may be disposed to break new holiday ground.

*The Bazaar,* June 23, 1918.

So far as we can call to mind, this is the first serious attempt to give in book form a concrete idea of the pleasures derivable from a trip on our inland waterways, and the author is to be congratulated upon the way in which he has performed his self-imposed task. That, however, it has been a labour of love is evident from the way in which the subject is handled throughout. . . . A thoroughly good book.

*The Bookman,* Christmas, 1918.

This further edition of a novel travel book comes as a welcome reminder of still another field of delightful exploration open to anyone with a taste for sculling or motor-boating and the leisure to indulge it.

*The Car,* January 8, 1919.

The book has novelty to commend it; again, the author has a pleasing touch, a freshness—naïveté, perhaps, best describes it—that is a relief to those surfeited with the ordinary book of to-day; and, thirdly, Mr. Bonthron has and expresses ideas of his own.

*W. H. Smith and Sons' Book Notes.*

This may reawaken in many readers pleasant memories of past excursions; it will give others new ideas as to where and how to spend their annual holiday. The inland waterways of Great Britain are both more numerous and more navigable than most people imagine.

THOMAS MURBY & Co., 1, FLEET LANE, LONDON, E.C. 4.

# REVIEWS

*Eastern Morning News* (Hull), January 6, 1916.

Mr. Bonthron sets us longing for the end of the war and for the chance to resume old pursuits. No man who has ever spent a week exploring a canal or a river can read this book of experiences without longing for the return of the time when he may venture out upon his own account. . . . The nearest he gets to us is Grantham, from which town he took a canal trip to Nottingham.

*The Westminster Gazette,* January 8 and 14, and February 3, 1916.

Mr. P. Bonthron regards canal travelling under favourable weather conditions as an ideal pastime; others would probably think it too slow. It gives an opportunity, at all events, of seeing many pleasant scenes and time to enjoy them. Those who would like to try the author's method of holiday-making will find in his book all the information that they are likely to need. It is essentially practical.

*The Standard,* January 8, 1916.

Here is a book plentifully equipped with not merely a good map, but many illustrations and useful hints for people who care to hire a boat and take their holiday by steering it in placid waters.

*The Worcestershire Chronicle,* January 15, 1916.

The author gives the practical details likely to be asked for by those who propose to follow in his wake. . . . No hotel or library on the banks of the many canals and rivers visited by Mr. Bonthron should be without this excellent and interesting guide.

*The Motor,* January 25, 1916.

Those of our readers who take an interest in our inland waterways—and there must be many of them—will be particularly pleased to have the new book by Mr. P. Bonthron entitled *My Holidays on Inland Waterways.* It is a chatty recountal of a series of cruises. . . . The book is very clearly the work of a keen enthusiast who has enjoyed every hour of every day which he has devoted to his cruisings. . . . *My Holidays on Inland Waterways* is an eminently readable book.

*The Daily News,* February 1, 1916.

His book will no doubt attract after the war many adventurers who will desire to emulate the author's experiences.

*Glasgow Evening Citizen,* February 3, 1916.

How many of our readers (says the *Westminster Gazette*) could say straight off where exactly Canvey Island is? Mr. P. Bonthron, in his book just issued, *My Holidays on Inland Waterways* (Murby), devotes a chapter to it.

# HOLIDAYS ON INLAND WATERWAYS

*The Oxford Chronicle,* February 4, 1916.

Holidaymakers might do worse than follow Mr. Bonthron's example and explore our canals. . . . Though Mr. Bonthron is mainly interested in canals as holiday resorts, his itinerary has included rivers too, and he tells, among other things in this volume, of a complete exploration of the Thames from its sources at Thames Head.

*The Fife Herald and Fife News,* February 9, 1916.

Among the innumerable ways of spending a holiday it must have occurred to very few to devote their hours of relaxation to exploring the canals of England and Scotland. Yet in the book before us—a beautifully got up demy octavo volume of one hundred and eighty-six pages — Mr. Bonthron tells how he sailed over 2,000 miles on these canals by motor boat and pleasure skiff and found the experience full of interesting and varied incident.

*The Kent Messenger,* February 12, 1916.

The fact is that, apart from the comparative dearth of motor boats, very few people know the opportunities from their use which Great Britain affords by her natural waterways and its canals. To many people the canal is regarded as something obsolete, but a perusal of this book (which one reviewer has described as "the best of its kind since Rob Roy"), will show how extensive are the waterways which are navigable to small craft.

*The Field,* February 12, 1916.

The endeavour of Mr. Bonthron has been above all things to make his book informative, and he is to be congratulated upon the result of his efforts.

*The Globe,* February 17, 1916.

For years past there have been some enthusiasts who have found pleasure and healthful exercise in cruising on the canals, and *My Holidays on Inland Waterways* is a timely and useful publication.

*Daily Express,* February 17, 1916.

Mr. Bonthron is an expert waterman. He has been through Hackney by motor-boat; he has shot the rapids in a pleasure skiff throughout the dangerous reaches of the Wye.

*The Field,* March 4, 1916.

The other day I picked up a book which started me off full tilt on the road of joyous reminiscence. It is entitled *My Holidays on Inland Waterways.* . . . It is not for me to review the book (that has already been done in an earlier number of the *Field*), but I cannot help expressing my gratitude to the author for recalling to my mind so many things which it is good to remember, especially just now.

# REVIEWS

*Yorkshire Post,* October 17, 1917.

The hope of encouraging the development of our canals has induced Mr. P. Bonthron to issue a second edition of *My Holidays on Inland Waterways.* . . . Mr. Bonthron points out that it is possible to travel by canal from near the Tower of London to Yorkshire.

*Glasgow Herald,* March 2, 1916.

Mr. Bonthron here presents a very interesting and steadily vivacious record, which shows how possible it is, with the necessary resources and accomplishments, to enjoy diversified and refreshing holidays, within the British borders. . . . Altogether he has written a bright, enjoyable book, which is well and copiously illustrated from photographs.

*British Citizen,* April 7, 1917.

It is with great pleasure that we have pursued Mr. Peter Bonthron's book. . . . Although a record of leisure pleasantly spent, his book is very suggestive as to the utility of communication by our artificial waterways, for commercial purposes. As a matter of fact, perhaps unconsciously, he makes many valuable remarks from a commercial point of view.

*Syren and Shipping,* January 19, 1916.

If England's inland waterways are not used commercially to the extent they might or should be, they certainly afford scope for some delightful pleasure cruises. This is the verdict of Mr. P. Bonthron, of the British Motor Boat Club, who can speak from practical experience gained by traversing 2,000 miles of British canals and other inland waters. . . . The work is brightly written and charmingly and copiously illustrated. . . Anyone who contemplates following his example would do well to bear in mind two pieces of very sage advice. The first is that the voyager must not expect to find a Cecil or a Savoy when he brings up for the night, and, secondly, he *must* carry a good reserve of petrol, so as to be independent of the local supply, which generally is not there.

*The Shipping Gazette,* January 27, 1916.

Of outstanding interest is the volume entitled *My Holidays on Inland Waterways.* . . . He adds a useful paragraph in regard to the employment of attachable motors, which can be fitted to row-boats. This mode of propulsion could, he points out, be utilised with advantage in canal travelling. . . . It is a work which cannot but appeal to all who take their pleasure in motor launch, houseboat, or skiff.

# HOLIDAYS ON INLAND WATERWAYS

*The Motor Ship and Motor Boat,* January 27, 1916.

Great is the number of marine motorists who have felt the desire to explore the inland counties by water, but have been prevented by lack of knowledge of the waterways and the belief that the majority of them are unnavigable, even for relatively shallow-draught motor boats. . . . Probably much more interest will be centred in them in the future, owing to the fact that many who have previously gone abroad for cruising will be inclined to stay at home, and the book which has just been written by Mr. Peter Bonthron, entitled *My Holidays on Inland Waterways,* should, for these reasons, be read by all who use a motor boat for pleasure purposes.

*The Yachting Monthly,* February, 1916.

Whatever might be thought of their commercial utility, there must be few who will not be grateful to Mr. Bonthron for showing by practical experience that a good holiday custom can be indulged by using unfrequented water routes.

*Yachtsman,* March 3, 1916.

When we talk of canal cruising it is the usual habit to think of Holland and Belgium. Mr. P. Bonthron, member of the B.M.B.C., does us a good service by drawing attention to the possibilities of British canals for cruising. . . . The whole book forms a splendid guide and the illustrations are numerous.

*Nautical Magazine,* April, 1916.

Practical hints are given for those wishing to follow the track of the many paths traversed.

*Fairplay,* April 20, 1916.

Wherever he has been he has something of interest to tell and to show, and those of my readers who are that way inclined will find a perusal of his book, and of the excellent photographs and map accompanying it, to their advantage.

*Shipping World,* September 12, 1917.

Mr. P. Bonthron's most readable and brightly illustrated book.

*The Rudder* (New York), May, 1916.

After the war there is bound to be a great rush of people from this country to the British Isles and the Continent of Europe. Those who desire to see Great Britain as she really is should wander far away from the usual tourists' set routes, charter a small cabin cruiser and cruise the various rivers and canals. Then they will obtain a true idea of the real beauties and quaint customs of the country. Before doing this, however, they should read *My Holidays on Inland Waterways,* by Peter Bonthron.

# MY HOLIDAYS ON INLAND WATERWAYS

COMING DOWN THE OXFORD CANAL.

FRONTISPIECE (*to face title-page*)

# MY HOLIDAYS ON INLAND WATERWAYS

## 2000 MILES CRUISING BY MOTOR BOAT AND PLEASURE SKIFF ON THE CANALS AND RIVERS OF GREAT BRITAIN

P. BONTHRON

MEMBER OF THE BRITISH MOTOR-BOAT CLUB

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*WITH SEVENTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAP*

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LONDON:
THOMAS MURBY & CO.,
1, FLEET LANE, LUDGATE CIRCUS, E.C.4.

*First published, January, 1916*
*Second Edition, May, 1917*
*Third Edition, October, 1919*

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# INTRODUCTION

THERE has been considerable discussion at various times in and out of Parliament as to the development of our inland waterways, and the cry of "Back to the Canals" has aroused more than ordinary interest in this country.

My experiences, however, of canal exploration, covering some 2,000 miles by motor boat and pleasure skiff, have been undertaken purely from the pleasure point of view, and the following pages are compiled from the diaries or log books of my cruises without any pretensions to literary merit.

Given favourable weather conditions canal travelling is an ideal pastime. One passes through lovely and constantly varying scenery, with beautiful panoramas unfolding themselves at intervals; and there is always the charm of unfamiliar views.

These waterways are geographically interesting, as they lead through practically unknown country, and are left severely alone by the tourist.

As many of the canals were traversed some years back, any intending tourists should enquire from the proper authorities, as to the navigations being open and available for boating purposes.

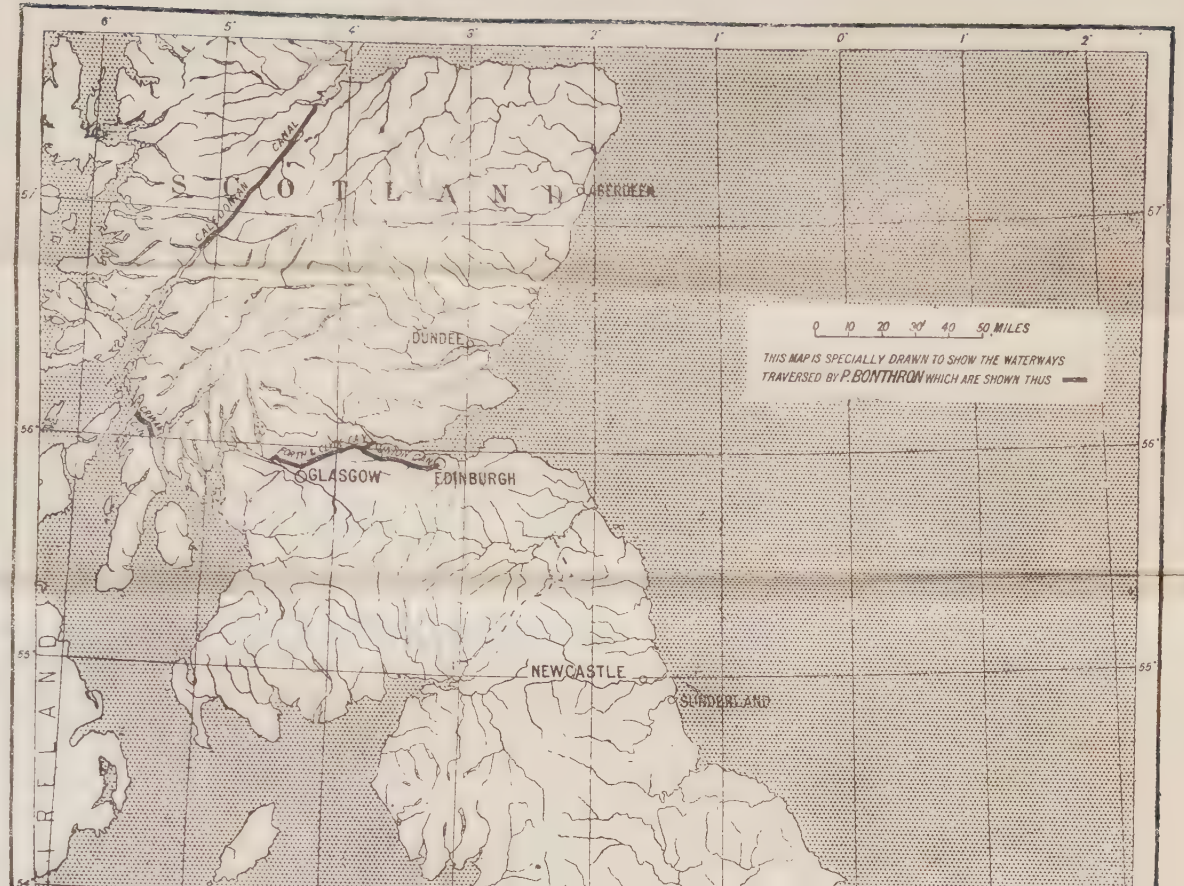
For any further reference I would recommend the following guides: "Bradshaw's Canals," by H. R. de Salis; "Inland Cruising," by G. Westall; and "The Oarsman's Guide," and "Cruising Club Manual," by E. M. Prothero and W. A. Clark. These books will supply much useful information.

I might add that in recent times a small portable motor engine, made adjustable for fixing to row boats, has been introduced, and this mode of propulsion could be utilized for canal travelling to advantage.

Should there be any difficulty in procuring suitable row boats for any such excursion, one should communicate with Salter Bros., Oxford, who specially lay themselves out to provide and despatch craft to any part of the country.

In conclusion, I would say that in travelling through these waterways my motor boat was in a number of instances the pioneer of this class of craft.

P. B.


6°
5°
4°
3°
2°
1°
0°
1°
2°
57°
56°
55°
54°
S C O T L A N D
ABERDEEN
CALEDONIAN CANAL
DUNDEE
FORTH & CLYDE CANAL
GLASGOW
EDINBURGH
NEWCASTLE
SUNDERLAND
IRELAND
0 10 20 30 40 50 MILES
THIS MAP IS SPECIALLY DRAWN TO SHOW THE WATERWAYS
TRAVERSED BY P. BONTHRON WHICH ARE SHOWN THUS

SHEFFIELD
NOTTINGHAM
DERBY
SHREWSBURY
LEICESTER
KINGS LYNN
NORWICH
BIRMINGHAM
WORCESTER
HEREFORD
CHEPSTOW
CARDIFF
BRISTOL
LONDON
CROYDON
BASINGSTOKE
SOUTHAMPTON
PLYMOUTH
WALES
ENGLAND
FRANCE
53°
52°
51°
50°
5°
4°
3°
2°
1° West of Greenwich 0° East of Greenwich 1°

# ITINERARY OF HOLIDAYS ON THE CANALS AND RIVERS OF GREAT BRITAIN

As a guide to others who may wish to explore the waterways of England, I give a detailed list of the routes traversed. To anyone who is enthusiastic over sculling or motor boating, there is no more enjoyable way of spending a holiday than on one of the practically unknown waterways of the country.

These excursions were done chiefly at week-ends and Bank Holiday times, and the mileage covered in all is over two thousand miles.

The routes covered are as follows :—

WATERWAYS TRAVERSED

## ENGLAND

The River Thames from the sources at Thames Head, Cirencester and Seven Springs, Cheltenham, to the Nore, including the tributaries, Cherwell, Thame and Loddon, likewise all the various Docks to Tilbury, and the respective Creeks of Bow, Barking, Deptford, Dartford and Rainham, also the Surrey, Grosvenor and Kensington Canals; in fact, the river in every way from its source downwards, in all ... ... ... ... ... ... ... say, 220 miles.

| | Miles. |
|---|---|
| Grand Junction Canal Main Line... ... ... ... | 94 |
| Leicester Branch (Norton, near Daventry, to Leicester) ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 41 |
| Branches— | |
| Paddington Canal (G. Junc.) ... ... ... ... | 14 |
| Slough Canal ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 5 |
| Northampton Canal ... ... ... ... ... ... | 5 |
| Aylesbury Canal ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 6 |
| Wendover Canal (in disuse) ... ... ... ... | 7 |
| Buckingham Canal (partly disused) ... ... | 11 |
| | 183 |
| Leicester Navigation, Leicester, to Loughborough, Leicester ... ... ... ... ... ... | 16 |
| Loughborough Navigation (River Soar), Loughborough to the Trent ... ... ... ... | 9 |
| Coventry Canal, Fradley (Trent and Mersey Canal) to Hawkesbury Junction on Oxford Canal ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 32 |
| | 57 |
| Regent's Canal (from River Thames to Paddington) ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 8 |
| Kennet and Avon Canal (Bristol to Reading, Berks) ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 90 |

| | Miles. |
|---|---|
| Thames and Severn Canal, Lechlade (Glos) and Stroud (now in disuse) ... ... ... ... | 30 |
| Gloucester and Berkeley Canal (Glos) ... ... | 13 |
| Stroudwater Canal (Glos) ... ... ... ... ... | 8 |
| River Severn (Shrewsbury to Gloucester) ... | 91 |
| Worcester and Birmingham Canal (Worcester to King's Norton, S/Avon Canal) ... ... | 25 |
| Warwick and Birmingham Canal (part) and Fazeley ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 8 |
| Stratford and Avon Canal (part) ... ... ... ... | 13 |
| Warwick and Napton Canal (Warwick to Napton, Warwickshire) ... ... ... ... ... | 14 |
| Oxford Canal from Oxford to Hawkesbury Junction to Coventry Canal ... ... ... ... | 78 |
| | 280 |
| River Lea from Thames to Hertford, Herts (via Bow Creek and down to Limehouse out to the Thames) ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 29 |
| River Stort (River Lea to Bishop's Stortford, Herts) ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 14 |
| | 43 |
| River Stour (The Great), Canterbury and Fordwich to Ramsgate ... ... ... ... ... ... | 23 |

| | Miles. |
|---|---|
| River Rother (Midhurst to Pulborough, Sussex) | 13 |
| River Arun (Newbridge, Billinghurst to Littlehampton, Sussex) ... ... ... ... ... ... | 22 |
| | 35 |
| Grand Military Canal (from Rye, Sussex, to Hythe, Kent) ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 21 |
| Sussex Ouse (Barcombe to Newhaven, Sussex) | 15 |
| River Adur (Henfield to Shoreham, Sussex) ... | 10 |
| | 25 |
| River Dart (Totnes to Dartmouth, Devon) ... | 10 |
| River Medway (Chatham to above Tonbridge, Kent) ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 31 |
| Gravesend and Rochester Canal to Higham (Kent) ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 4 |
| River Wey (from Guildford to Weybridge, Surrey) ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 15 |
| Basingstoke Canal (from Basingstoke, Hants, to Weybridge, Surrey) ... ... ... ... ... | 38 |
| | 53 |

| | Miles. |
|---|---|
| Ipswich Canal, Stowmarket, to Ipswich, Suffolk (River Gripping), thence on the Orwell to Harwich, Essex ... ... ... ... ... ... | 26 |
| River Colne, part (Wivenhoe and Colchester, Essex) ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 4 |
| River Stour, Suffolk (from Sudbury, Suffolk, to Manningtree, Essex) ... ... ... ... ... | 25 |
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| River Cam (Cambridge to Ely, Cambs) ... ... | 17 |
| River Ouse (The Great), from Bedford, Beds, to King's Lynn, Norfolk, near the Wash... | 75 |

| | Miles. |
|---|---|
| River Avon (from Stratford-on-Avon to Tewkesbury, Glos) ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 44 |
| River Witham (Boston to Lincoln) ... ... ... | 36 |
| Fossdyke Canal (Lincoln to the Trent) ... ... | 11 |
| River Nene (Northampton and near the Wash to Sutton Bridge, Lincs)... ... ... ... ... | 90 |
| | 137 |
| The Norfolk Broads ... ... ... ... ... ... | 120 |
| Bude Canal, Cornwall ... ... ... ... ... ... | 4 |
| Itchen River, Southampton (part) ... ... ... | 3 |
| Hamble River, Southampton ... ... ... ... | 8 |
| River Stour, at Christchurch (part) ... ... ... | 4 |
| Avon (Salisbury), at Christchurch (part) ... ... | 2 |
| | 17 |

## WALES

| | |
|---|---|
| River Wye (from Hay, Brec., to Chepstow, Mon) ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 100 |

## SCOTLAND

| | Miles. |
|---|---|
| The Caledonian Canal ... ... ... ... ... ... | 60 |
| The Crinan Canal, Argyllshire ... ... ... ... | 9 |
| The Forth and Clyde Canal to Bowling on the Clyde ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 35 |
| The Union Canal (from Edinburgh) ... ... ... | 30 |
| | 134 |

NOTE.—The descriptions in this book are based mainly on the accounts of my cruises, which have appeared from time to time in "The Motor Boat," "The Motor," "The Autocar," and "The Lock to Lock Times," and I have to thank the Editors of these journals for the privilege of permitting me to make this use of the articles.'

P. B.

## CANAL DEVELOPMENT

The Government having taken over the control of the canals during war time, the following letter by the author of this book, which appeared in the *Shipping Gazette*, on the subject of Canal Development, will be read with interest :

The question of canal development is again before the public, and perhaps you will permit a few lines on this subject from one who has travelled over 2,000 miles on the waterways of this country.

There is much to be said in favour of the said development, especially in the direction where there are such industries as collieries, brickfields, or quarries and like concerns.

I would, however, particularly advocate their use within a radius of, say, 50 miles or so from a seaport town, for the good reason that the heavy dock and landing dues on general goods for distribution are thereby avoided. Beyond these advantages caution might be observed, as there are numerous difficulties to be overcome, the water supply being the chief, and no comparison in that direction can be made with such countries as Holland and Germany, with their natural advantages. Where the water has to be utilized by artificial means the expense would be so costly as to eliminate any advantage there is in the difference between the canal and railway rates, and, after all, the whole contention is to effect an economy. The writer has also found in his travels that the canals in England do not, generally speaking, pass through populous towns, likely to encourage heavy and paying waterborne traffic.

Furthermore, the all-important point of wages must not be overlooked, as the canal boatman, if such development did take place, might not accept the rate of remuneration he is now receiving.

These are points that want looking into seriously, and that on the top of the vast amount of capital required for such a reconstruction as is suggested.

THE MOTOR LAUNCH "BALGONIE."

OUR SKIFF ON THE WATERWAYS.

PLATE II.

# MY HOLIDAYS ON INLAND WATERWAYS

## I

## ROUND THE CANALS: A MOTOR-BOAT TRIP THROUGH THE HEART OF ENGLAND. 400 Miles from Chertsey, viâ the River Thames, Thames and Severn, Stroudwater, Gloucester and Berkeley Canals, River Severn, the Worcester and Birmingham, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick and Birmingham, Warwick and Napton and the Oxford Canals, back to Chertsey.

"ALL clear ahead?" "Ay, ay, sir," responded the chief mate, giving the starting handle a turn and letting go the painter, in compliance with further commands. So now we're off at last on our long-talked-of canal cruise through the heart of England in our 6 h.p. Daimler.

After our previous experiences, when we traversed nearly 300 miles in the canals, including the Grand

Junction, Oxford, Basingstoke, and others, our appetites became whetted for more explorations, and in the present programme our ideas assumed a much bolder form, in so far that practically a fortnight was to be absorbed in carrying out our intentions.

Preparatory to starting on such a journey as this, one would hardly realize the amount of work involved in corresponding with all the respective companies and parties concerned to procure the necessary information as to the arrangements of each canal. The writer thinks he must have indited some 50 letters before setting out. Then, again, there are the hotel plans to see to as one progresses so that really it becomes in a way an undertaking which one would little imagine.

Our holiday was fixed for Whit week, and the original intention was to do the trip right through with a continuous run, but this we found impossible, as it is the custom for some of the companies to do repairs during holiday time. In consequence of this we had to make a break in our journey at Cirencester (Glos). These possible stoppages should be noted by any canal motorists making their plans.

The good ship "Balgonie" was overhauled at Chertsey (Surrey) for the expedition, and the many little requirements befitting such a trip were put aboard. In addition, we had provided ourselves with the necessary maps and particulars of the routes, including Bradshaw's Guide to the Canals, by Mr. Henry Rodolph de Salis, and an invaluable production to those covering inland waters we found it to

OLD BOVENEY LOCK,
Near Windsor.

[CRUISE I.
*Page* 1.

COMING THROUGH SHIPLAKE LOCK,
Near Henley.

[CRUISE I.
*Page* 1.

PLATE III.

be. With equipment thus complete we started from there on our voyage of exploration to waters hitherto unknown to the motor boat.

The voyagers aboard were again the proverbial "three men in a boat," also our motoneer (a cognomen suggested at the time for a motor-boat engineer), and the handy man—both being in great demand for the many duties to be performed, the latter being much sought after at times as the provider of all good things in the way of light refreshments, etc., necessary for the voyage.

Our first day on Father Thames was an auspicious one as far as weather and distance covered were concerned. We made practically a non-stop run from Chertsey (Surrey) to Henley-on-Thames (Oxon), taking the whole day for the distance of about 33 miles. The next day brought us from Henley to Shillingford Bridge Hotel (Berks), where one might do worse than stop, even for a few days, with all its reposeful surroundings; however, we were there as "bonâ-fide" travellers, and with that motive only.

Our next stop from there was Oxford, to which place we had a delightful run, with excellent weather. As to the journey up to this point, I will not touch further on it, as the route is so well known to all river men.

Leaving Folly Bridge with a "bon voyage" from the genial Mr. Salter, well known as the owner of the Kingston to Oxford steamers, we proceeded on our journey. With a late afternoon start, this was to be an easy day, as Eynsham (Oxon), some 8½ miles

ahead, was our destination. Acting on advice, we took advantage of the Oxford Canal—a mile or so from the start—to avoid Medley and King's Weirs, where shallows abounded, and we made our exit some three miles farther on by Duke's Lock and Cutting, which brought us out at the latter-named weir. I may mention that it was with some trepidation that we started on the run to Lechlade (Glos), owing to the reports received as to the condition of the river.

We were afraid that we were rather late in the season in starting for these upper reaches, as the weeds grow fast and the water gradually gets less as the season advances. However, the heavy rains of the previous week greatly assisted us, altering matters in our favour so that we had a very satisfactory run indeed. The weeds were there right enough, and so were the shallows, but both these we overcame. On the question of weeds on the propeller, it is useless to persevere when they are there and by no means good for the engines, as it strains them.

We stopped at Eynsham Bridge, after passing through Eynsham Weir—rather a laborious operation—and put up in the village some three-quarters of a mile from the riverside, where we were comfortably housed at the Red Lion Hotel, an old-fashioned place, which, by the way, Verdant Green, of Oxford fame, used to frequent in bygone times. The following morning turned out very wet, but that in no way deterred us from making a start.

With the report received of the state of the navigation, however, we thought it advisable to procure the

REGATTA TIME: SHIPLAKE-ON-THAMES.
(With our Houseboat "Clytie" on the left.) [CRUISE I.
*Page* 1.

NEW BRIDGE (Below Lechlade),
Said to be the oldest Bridge on the Thames. [CRUISE I.
*Page* 1.

PLATE IV.

services of a horse and man—a local yeoman—at Bablockhythe, as a " stand-by "—not a very nautical procedure, perhaps, but we were desirous of keeping our times as mapped out. This horseman's services we in no way needed that day, as it turned out, but he knew every inch of the course, and his pilotage directions were valuable. The movements of this " John Gilpin " amused us greatly as he turned up at all odd times doing a double along the bank, and then disappearing for a time taking short cuts, or calling perhaps at some friendly hostelry, and then appearing on the scene on his warlike charger at full gallop.

The run to Lechlade (Glos) was quite satisfactory, with very interesting navigation, owing to the tortuous character of the Thames the whole way. The country all up this part, although not striking in scenery, is of a delightfully rural nature. During this part of the journey, we had continuously showery weather; however, being well protected on board with a top awning, and another sheet round aft, it in no way affected our pleasure, or even damped our spirits. On our way from Eynsham we called at New Bridge —which, by the way, is the oldest bridge on the river, said to be some 800 years old—and here I stayed some 10 years previously when on a skiff trip down river from Cricklade, the navigable source of the Thames. Lechlade we duly reached about 8.30 p.m., having caught some fine glimpses of Thames scenery. The venerable landlord of 84 summers of the Trout Inn was waiting to receive us, and we stayed for the night at this quaint little place. What struck us above

Oxford was the scarcity of the boats we came across, notwithstanding the fact that it was holiday week; we did not encounter more than a dozen or so in the run of 40 miles, so that if complete seclusion and rest are wanted, where better could one go?

This is the highest point on the river that one can reach in a light-draught launch, although it is possible to take a skiff or canoe to Cricklade (Wilts), some 11 miles higher up. So there our journey on the good old Thames came to an end. And now for the Canals.

ST. JOHN'S LOCK, LECHLADE,
The first on the River Thames.

[CRUISE I.
*Page* 1.

ROUND TOWER, LECHLADE,
Entrance to Thames and Severn Canal.

[CRUISE II.
*Page* 7.

PLATE V.

## II

# ROUND THE CANALS: Continued FROM THE THAMES TO BIRMINGHAM.

THE Thames and Severn* was our first experience. It is 29 miles long, with 44 locks in all to Walbridge Stroud (Glos); one enters at Inglesham, about three-quarters of a mile above Lechlade Wharf. This canal, like most others, has had a varied career, and has consequently not developed as perhaps it might. The report about the condition of the weeds there again was such that we re-engaged our horseman, "John Gilpin," who not only stood by, but did yeoman service in pulling us through the parts where the propeller refused to go round, and glad we were of the auxiliary assistance.

Incidentally, too, our boat was well equipped against contingencies after our many experiences, and we had two coils and two accumulators, one set being fixed on each side; in addition to this, we carried a dry battery, good for many miles; then we had our tube ignition (which, however, was unsatisfactory), and, lastly, a stout towing mast—used also for the mast-head light—with a strong rope, so that we were

* Now closed for navigation.

in a measure prepared for any trouble that might arise. The last resort was, of course, the horseman, as already described, and in this again one enjoys a new and pleasant sensation after the vibrating engines, although, of course, this mode of progression is *infra dig.* to the motor boat tourist.

En route we passed Latton (Wilts), the junction for the North Wilts Canal, leading to Abingdon, via the Wilts and Berks Canal, but both these waterways have now been abandoned. Hitherto this formed a convenient, and not too long, circular tour to the Thames for those doing such trips. Such circular tours from and to the Thames, I may say, are not many, and the one we are now traversing is about the last left to us that can be so undertaken. The scenery along the banks of the canal is pleasing at many points, and it is the rural character that makes this class of travelling so attractive. We passed such places as Kempsford (Glos) and Cricklade (Wilts), and eventually reached Cirencester (Glos) by a cutting about 1½ miles from the main canal, and at this point, as already mentioned, we had to break our journey and leave the boat, owing to the repairs to the canals. From there we all hied back to town by rail, quite pleased with our trip and experiences so far. Cirencester (Glos) is a typical English market town of considerable antiquity.

Travelling down from London on the following Friday night to Cirencester with our party of five all told, we resumed our journey on the Thames and Severn Canal, making an early start next morning, as

we had a heavy day's work before us. The weather broke badly at our start, but cleared up afterwards very fine; there had been a very heavy rain all night through, but we were rather pleased at this, as the Thames and Severn water was not then over-abundant on the summit. After what we had come through with weeds, etc., we again had a horse and man provided, so as not to lose any time, and we were towed right to Sapperton Tunnel, some seven miles on.

This Sapperton is a fine piece of tunnelling, and, I understand, one of the longest in England, being 3,808 yards, or 2¼ miles in length. It was built at the end of the eighteenth century. Our intention was to motor through, but with the engine racing a little, and with patches of weeds here and there in the tunnel (although the water is comparatively clear) we decided to work the boat through. This we did by the aid of our boathooks and of a wire running along the side. We eventually accomplished this rather exciting piece of work in one hour and 35 minutes—all hands being at work. Both at the entrance to the tunnel and at the exit the rural scenery is very striking.

After this, the lock work begins seriously from the summit at Daneway, with group after group of locks, there being 28 for the remaining seven miles to Walbridge Stroud (Glos), and this took us from 2.15 p.m. up till half-past eight. The scenery on the latter run is of the finest description: one has the splendid advantage of seeing what is known as the Golden Valley to the fullest extent. As one wends one's way down the scenic effects are very fine indeed; in fact,

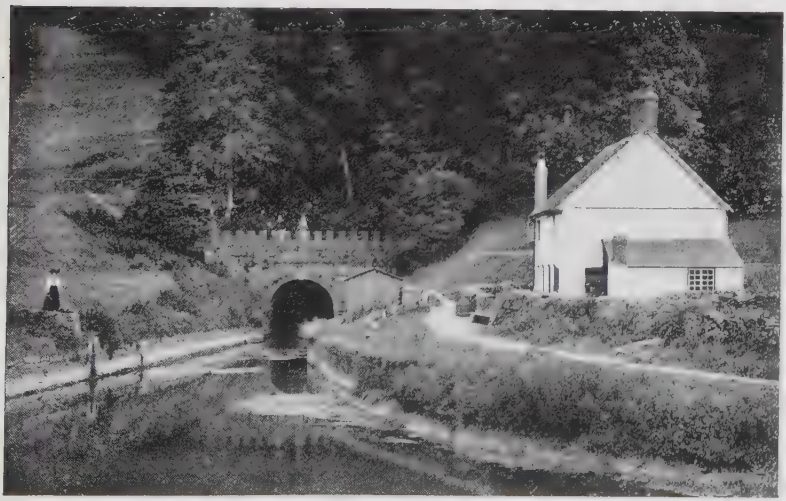
this part of the trip amply repaid us for any tediousness there was in coming through the multitudinous locks, which are so slow in filling. After the tunnel, our motor, working well, was brought into requisition, and we continued with it right through from there. We had the service of lock-keepers nearly all the way down, or got assistance, otherwise it would have entailed a heavy day's work. We were rather unfortunate with our locks here, in so far that a barge was ahead of us and the locks were against us all the way through. In consequence of this, our day's run was curtailed by, say, a couple of hours, but one must accept the inevitable in canal life. As before mentioned, we duly reached Walbridge Stroud, the end of the Thames and Severn Canal.

The Stroudwater Canal was our next move, and we decided, although late, to proceed, the moon being clear and the night fine. We travelled down as far as we could, having arranged in the meantime to have a conveyance to drive us back to Stroud, where we rested for the night, reaching there after 11 p.m. This made a 14-hours' day.

Next day, our eighth, we resumed our voyage below Stroud in beautiful weather, doing the remainder of the canal, when we joined the Gloucester and Berkeley Ship Canal at Saul (Glos). There we had a delay of about three hours, owing to a misunderstanding about the lock pass. Although it was a pleasant point to stay at, we were sorry at the stoppage, as we had a long day before us. Eventually we got started on this canal late in the afternoon, and had a fine run

PREPARING LUNCH ABOARD.

THE "BALGONIE" IN CANAL RIG.



SAPPERTON TUNNEL,
On the Thames and Severn Canal.

PLATE VI.

[CRUISE II.
*Page 7.*

of eight miles through to Gloucester without any locks, but with many drawbridges. This canal is worthy of special remark, being of a very substantial character, and is both wide and deep.

Entering the River Severn through the Dock Lock at Gloucester we found ourselves on the " high road " to Worcester, 29½ miles, with two large locks for this distance. We decided, with our engines going splendidly, although it was rather late for so long a journey, to make a bid for Worcester, so " full speed ahead " was the order of the night. The Severn, from what we saw of it before dusk, is not in any way striking in the way of picturesqueness, but it is a wonderful river for its long reaches, with extremely good depth of water, and the width all the way along surprises one. The moon on that evening was at its fullest, and the effect thereof was charming, fully compensating us for our late efforts. The locks on the Severn at Tewkesbury and Diglis are the largest I have seen, the former being a double one. After passing through Tewkesbury Lock we duly reached the " Port of Worcester " about midnight, after a most satisfactory run, having been on two canal systems and the River Severn. We were fortunate to find some people about, working late on the river steamboats, and they piloted us to our hotel : a haven of rest we were glad to see after having again been some 14 hours—more or less—under way, and having covered in all 42 miles—a very creditable performance with the conditions described.

After a pleasant stay at Worcester we made a late

start, the Worcester and Birmingham Canal being our next route, and Stoke Prior (Worcester), 13 miles ahead with 22 locks, being our goal, thus making it an easy day after our big run from the Stroudwater Canal. The time taken over this stretch was six hours. The locks themselves, known as narrow locks, are smaller than usual, there being a margin of only a few inches over our beam, but they are easily handled and filled. With such a very large number of locks in front of us, although we had our two men, we chartered a canal boatman at Worcester to assist us, rather than make a toil of a pleasure.

The extra man we found very useful, as he also watched the launch over night, a duty which we found essential, as there are few conveniences for housing en route. As no accommodation was procurable at Stoke Prior we trained to Droitwich (Worcester), about four miles off, and put up for the night there.

Our tenth day found us starting from Stoke Prior. The weather, which had previously held up fairly well, with fine spells of bright sunshine, quite broke down on that day, and we had an almost continuous downpour all the day through; however, that in no way interfered with our progress. Shortly after starting we had to encounter 36 locks in 12 miles to the summit of the canal. This we accomplished in $2\frac{3}{4}$ hours, not a bad feat, we thought, but by this time we were becoming adepts in motoring into the locks instead of working in with boathooks: it was adventuresome, but saved considerable time. After reaching the summit we had quite an enjoyable afternoon

going through the tunnels; we traversed no less than five of them, four of which we motored through ourselves, and through the fifth, 2,750 yards long, we were towed by the Canal Company's tug; the respective lengths of the others were 326, 352, 568, and 608 yards, all capacious and well-built tunnels. Then we came to King's Norton (Worcester), some few miles from Birmingham, the most northerly point of our journey, where we landed for letters.

## III

## ROUND THE CANALS: Continued. FROM BIRMINGHAM TO CHERTSEY. Through the lovely Oxford Canal and thence by the River Thames.

GOING along the fine and easily navigable Worcester and Birmingham Canal to King's Norton the scenery is of a pleasing rural character, and in some places in the latter half is very fine indeed, where one is away from towns or villages. At this point is the junction for the Stratford-on-Avon Canal, which we then entered en route to Hockley Heath (Warwick), some ten miles on, and where we stayed the night.

This canal is quite as picturesque as any that we have been through, and all the way the foliage on the banks is very luxuriant, making a very pleasing and charming run. The water is not so deep as some of the others traversed, so that our progress was not so great. However, for pleasing aspect, if one is in these parts, this canal should not be missed.

Next day was a memorable one, the 21st of June, the longest day of the year, and a long day it was, too, for us. We thought we were in for another soaker by the early morning aspect, but in the fore-

HOMEWARD BOUND. [CRUISE III.
*Page* 14.

THE GOLDEN VALLEY,
Thames and Severn Canal.

LATE VII. [CRUISE II.
*Page* 7.

noon it turned out fine, with plenty of sunshine, which was acceptable after our day with the "sou'westers." Leaving Hockley Heath at nine sharp, we at once encountered 19 locks in $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles, doing this in 1 hour and 35 minutes. This finished the Stratford-on-Avon Canal. We were then shunted on to the Warwick and Birmingham Canal, on which we did some eight miles with 24 locks to Budbrooke Junction. This canal is well kept up, and has some fine bits of wooded scenery as one gets along. In the afternoon we made a passing call at the ancient town of Warwick, which is well worthy of a visit. In doing a trip such as this one feels inclined to land at many places en route to view the cathedrals and explore the towns thoroughly, but we found to adopt this would entail a serious loss of time, our route being pretty well mapped out for each day's programme.

It was at this fine old town that we entered the Warwick and Napton Canal (14 miles with 25 locks), which took us down to the junction of the Oxford Canal, passing the well-known town of Leamington (Warwick) on the way. This canal we found also in good condition. A lot of traffic passes through here in transit between Birmingham and London.

We were really rather pleased with our run on that day, as altogether we had done 25 miles over part of the three canal companies' properties, and the very large number of 66 locks—an excellent piece of work, we considered — constituting, as far as we know, a record for a single day's lock work. On approaching

Napton-on-the-Hill (Warwick), our stopping place, we had a little coil trouble, which delayed our arrival about an hour; however, we duly reached our destination about 11 p.m. One of our friends landed at once and hurried up to the Crown Inn, some little distance off the canal, to procure rooms, and he was fortunate enough to catch the landlord just on the point of retiring for the night; after explaining the reason for disturbing him at such an unseemly hour, the necessary accommodation for all of us was procured. On our getting there, after toiling up the Hill (of Napton) —some 500 feet above sea-level—we were regaled at the inn with a savoury ham-and-egg supper by the obliging hostess. We were all glad to turn in after our "longest day" exertions. Napton-on-the-Hill is a lovely spot, and the view for miles and miles around from the old church at the summit of the hill stands almost unsurpassed. The weather now was superb, and we saw the surroundings to the greatest advantage.

In delightful weather we made a 10 o'clock start next day for our run on the Oxford Canal to Banbury (Oxon), leaving Napton-on-the-Hill with some regrets, as it is a quiet, dreamy, out-of-the-way spot where one could appreciate a few days' stop and rest. As our run for the day was a short one, viz., 22 miles with 21 locks, we did not hurry ourselves, but took things leisurely, partaking of lunch on the banks in picnic fashion, instead of, as usual, in the boat as we travelled along. The Oxford Canal we had previously done from Oxford, when we did the Grand

THE GOLDEN VALLEY, NEAR STROUD.

[CRUISE II.
*Page* 7.

WE STEER A CANAL BARGE,
On the Oxford Canal.

PLATE VIII.

[CRUISE III.
*Page* 14.

Junction circuit via Braunston to London, but we think we appreciated the reverse route from the Napton end even more. There is an absence of artificiality about this canal which one cannot help admiring; the fine open country with delightful solitude as one meanders round the bends into rural scenes is very refreshing. We arrived at Banbury about 7.30 p.m., after a particularly enjoyable day. Before dinner we took a stroll through this fine old and interesting town, and visited an ancient room of historic interest used in Oliver Cromwell's time. Visitors from all parts come to see this and likewise the celebrated Banbury Cross, and no visit is complete without purchasing some of the famous Banbury cakes. This we, of course, did to keep up the old traditions connected with the town.

It was here that we dispensed with the services of our lock opener from Worcester after he had been with us four days. He was a gallant old South African reservist by the way, and the possessor of two war medals with five bars—and he proved to us very valuable. This additional lock assistance makes the trip run more smoothly, and prevents delays if time is an object. One of our party was quite an expert chef, and as he had brought a Primus stove with him we had many little delicacies *à la Savoy*, so we fared well in that respect. He was quite an acquisition on the voyage, and of course was a popular man on board. Afternoon tea was also a regular institution on board the good ship.

Leaving the Town of Cakes (Banbury) the follow-

ing morning, Oxford was our next destination—28½ miles with 19 locks. The weather again being perfect we did not hurry unduly on our journey. The second half of this canal was equally enjoyable, and we considered it as pleasant to travel on as any we had yet done, although the Golden Valley on the Thames and Severn Canal and the entire Stratford-on-Avon Canal are certainly very fine. Generally speaking, canals are more or less hedged in, and the traveller does not get full advantage in viewing the country around. In the Oxford Canal one cannot get up the speed owing to the nature of the cutting, but the canal itself is particularly well cared for. Oxford we duly reached about 9.30, and stayed the night there. Proceeding, on this our 14th day, on Old Father Thames once again, we shaped our way down from Oxford, where we were joined by three ladies who came down with us from this point to Henley-on-Thames homeward bound, and the weather once again being ideal we had a very pleasant day, reaching Henley late in the evening.

This circular tour may be pronounced a great success, and if one is so bent a more delightful holiday could hardly be taken. It dispels, too, the erroneous impressions that some people have about canals and travelling thereon, as one passes through lovely country that it is the lot of very few to take advantage of. The great charm is that one is far from the beaten track, and human beings are few and far between. The adjacent country generally is conspicuous by the absence of population for miles around. This we

found also to be the case on our previous travels on the waterways in rural England. One is practically beyond the bounds of civilization, and yet still within hail of large towns. The ever-changing scenery keeps one alive all the way along, and the panoramic effect is very fine. In travelling thus one must put up with things as they are found, and be content at that; and all thoughts of "Metropoles" and "Cecils" must, of course, be left behind.

Perhaps the following suggestions may be useful to any intending motorists of the canal waterways. Take plenty of petrol on board, as it is not everywhere procurable. Our consumption was about 40 gallons for the four hundred miles. A piece of canvas about two feet deep round the boat is advisable, especially in going through the narrow locks. See that you have an ample supply of waterproofs or oil-skins for bad weather, and do not forget to procure the necessary winches for the respective canals. On our journey we grounded in getting alongside the bank to land our man to open the locks and draw-bridges more often than we cared for, and had we not had a particularly strong skeg our propeller blades must have gone many times; spare blades should therefore be carried in case of emergency. It would be advisable if possible to have a specially made guard to prevent the weed trouble at the propeller if it should be encountered. It is no use undertaking a canal cruise like this unless the boat is thoroughly well manned, otherwise it becomes a toil. Although we had three men for a part of the journey, and with our-

selves aboard, the work was all cut out for us, as there is always something to be done "on board ship," even if it is not to forget the catering department. We came to the conclusion that the most suitable craft for such cruising would be a motor boat or punt of shallow draught, and such we saw at Chertsey designed by Mr. James Taylor. In this patent boat, with the light draught of a few inches only, one would be enabled to travel at a much faster speed; besides, such a boat could always be conveyed easily by rail, or even taken out of the water if anything wanted seeing to, or if there was any hitch on the route.

With one or two exceptions only, the motor boat on the canals, we found, was practically unknown, and we take it that we were virtually the pioneers of these waterways under such conditions. To the managers of the respective canal companies with whom we have been in communication we have to tender our sincere thanks for the courteous manner in which they have treated us—nothing was a trouble to them, and every facility was granted to us to make our trip run smoothly. The journey was practicallv a non-stop run, the Daimler behaving splendidly all the way round. Our launch is 27ft. by 6ft. 3in., with a draught of 2ft. 9in. aft, which latter is about the most one can safely rely on for such a trip as that described. We should like to add that wherever we went we were loyally and hospitably received by all with whom we came in contact. And our tour drew to a close, as on our 15th and final day we made Chertsey our destination, thereby completing a most satisfactory cruise,

so much so that the party and crew were ready to start off again for another trip, but that was not to be, as "Business is Business," and we all hied back to town, all the better for our holiday.

A very good idea of our rate of progress can be gathered from the figures given herewith, relative to the distances travelled, and the number of locks, tunnels or weirs encountered. The short list of hotels where we stayed should prove useful to prospective tourists of our inland waterways, as we found one of our greatest difficulties was to arrange our hotels beforehand. It will also be seen that the number of counties we passed through amounted to no fewer than ten.

DISTANCES TRAVELLED.

| | | Miles. | Locks. | Remarks. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st day | Chertsey to Henley... | 33 | 13 | — |
| 2nd ,, | Henley to Shillingford ... ... ... | 28 | 9 | — |
| 3rd ,, | Shillingford to Oxford ... ... ... | 19 | 6 | — |
| 4th ,, | Oxford to Eynsham, via Duke's Lock (½ day) ... ... | 8½ | 4 | 1 weir |
| 5th ,, | Eynsham to Lechlade | 24 | 8 | 1 ,, |
| | THAMES AND SEVERN CANAL. | | | |
| 6th ,, | Lechlade to Cirencester ... ... | 16 | 16 | — |
| 7th ,, | Cirencester to Stroud | 16½ | 28 | 1 tunnel |

| | | Miles. | Locks. | Remarks. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Stroudwater Canal.** | | | |
| 7th day | Stroud to Stonehouse | 2½ | 4 | — |
| 8th ,, | Stonehouse to Saul | 4½ | 7 | — |
| | **Gloucester and Berkeley Canal.** | | | |
| ,, ,, | Saul to Gloucester ... | 8 | — | — |
| | **River Severn.** | | | |
| ,, ,, | Gloucester to Worcester ... ... | 29½ | 4 | — |
| | **Worcester and Birmingham Canal.** | | | |
| 9th ,, | Worcester to Stoke Prior (½ day) ... | 13 | 22 | — |
| 10th ,, | Stoke Prior to King's Norton ... ... | 12 | 36 | 4 tunnels |
| | **Stratford and Avon Canal.** | | | |
| ,, ,, | King's Norton to Hockley Heath | 10 | — | 1 tunnel |
| ,, ,, | Hockley Heath to Kingswood ... | 3 | 19 | — |
| | **Warwick and Birmingham Canal.** | | | |
| 11th ,, | Kingswood to Warwick (near) ... | 8 | 22 | — |
| | **Warwick and Napton Canal** | | | |
| ,, ,, | Warwick (near) to Napton ... ... | 14 | 25 | — |
| | **Oxford Canal.** | | | |
| 12th ,, | Napton to Banbury... | 22 | 21 | — |
| 13th ,, | Banbury to Oxford | 28½ | 19 | — |

River Thames.

| | | Miles. | Locks. | Remarks. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14th day | Oxford to Henley | 47 | 15 | — |
| 15th ,, | Henley to Chertsey | 33 | 13 | — |
| | | 380 | 291 | 6 tunnels |
| | | | | 2 weirs |

The counties we passed through were :—Middlesex, Surrey, Berks, Bucks, Oxon, Gloucester, Wiltshire, Worcester, Northampton, and Warwickshire.

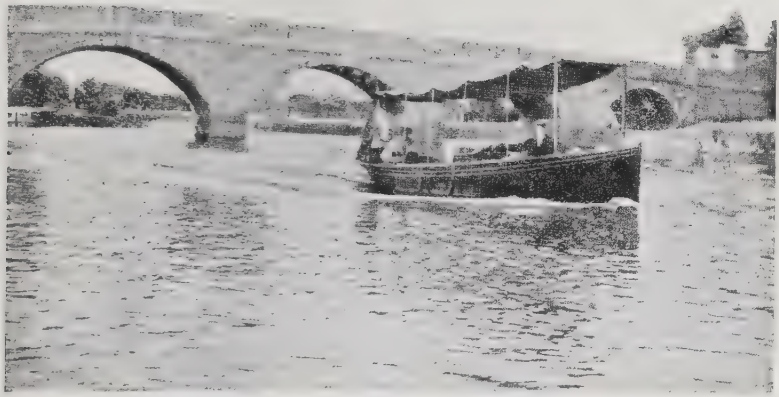
Hotels we stopped at :—Shillingford Bridge, near Wallingford; King's Arms, Oxford; Red Lion, Eynsham; Trout Inn, Lechlade; Fleece, Cirencester; Royal George, Stroud; Crown, Worcester; Park Hotel, Droitwich; Orchard House (C.T.C.); Hocklev Heath (Warwick); Crown Inn, Napton-on-the-Hill; Red Lion, Banbury.

## IV

## ROUND LONDON BY MOTOR BOAT 100 MILES CIRCULAR TOUR. From Chertsey, viâ the River Thames and the Regent's, Paddington, Grand Junction and Slough Canals.

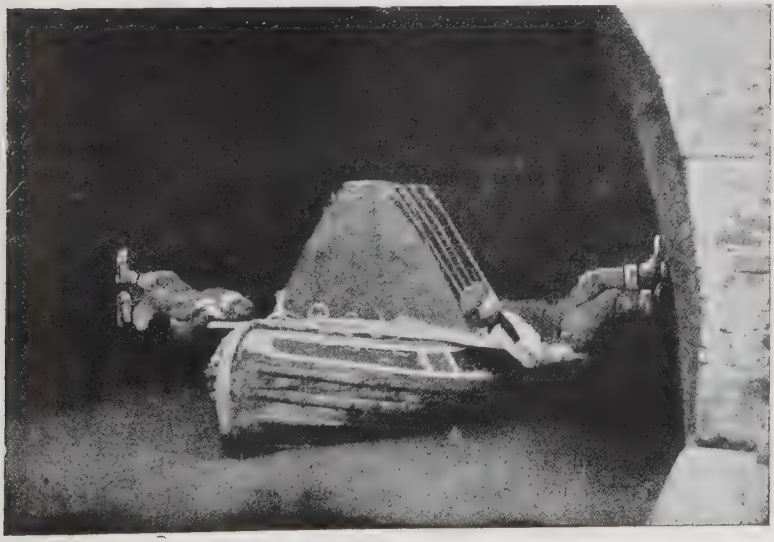
THE "Man in the Street" may find it difficult to realize that proceeding a short distance down the River Thames from the Tower of London one can enter a canal at the Regent's Dock, Limehouse, and thence traverse nearly every waterway in England. But such is the case; for example, one can travel thence to Warwickshire, or even to far Yorkshire.

The Regent's Canal has so many points of interest that I make no apology for recounting the experience outlined in my sub-heading. Naturally, we made use of our petrol motor boat for the journey, which worked out, in total length, at nearly 100 miles, our starting place being Chertsey in Surrey. Our crew, it should be mentioned, consisted of a party of three "A.B.'s," with our handy man, likewise the motor engineer. Our first stopping place was Surbiton (Surrey), and then we proceeded down river to below London Bridge. This run was very interesting after our various up-river and inland experiences. The navigation on the reaches below, say, Richmond



THE "BALGONIE" LEAVING CHERTSEY FOR THE CRUISE ROUND LONDON. [CRUISE IV.

*Page* 24.



*(By permission of Underwood & Co.)*

"LEGGING" IN CANAL TUNNEL.

[CRUISE IV.

*Page* 24.

PLATE IX.

Lock, demands experience and care, on account of the number of bridges to be negotiated and the strong currents for which allowances have to be made.

Below Richmond Lock, which we reached about low water, we touched bottom in mid-stream near Isleworth, and I mention this just to show that caution must be observed. However, no harm was done. We eventually entered the Regent's Canal barge lock, and wended our way across the dock amidst the steamers and barges, and arrived at the first lock on the canal itself.

There are 13 locks in all on this canal, which measures 8½ miles in length, and takes one through the very heart of London, passing such places as Stepney, Hackney, Islington, St. Pancras, and Paddington, the last-named being the terminus of the Regent's Canal. About two miles from the starting point is the Hertford Union Canal (or Duckett's), about 1¼ miles in length, which, by the way, is the junction to the River Lea, thereby making a through line of route to Hertford and Bishop's Stortford (Herts). The passer-by gets an insight to the value of such a canal, and one notices continuous wharves for miles, including the loading and discharging depots for all the large railway companies.

Special mention should be made of the tunnels, of which there are two. The first one is at the City Road, and is about three-quarters of a mile long, the traffic through it being worked by a specially-constructed steam barge travelling every two hours, but we took advantage of our own motive power, and got

through in about 20 minutes. The second one, near the Edgware Road, is shorter, about a quarter of a mile long, and this we also motored through. In this case, on account of the barges ahead working their way through, we took about half-an-hour for this short journey. The barges are chiefly towed by horses, but at the latter tunnel these are unhitched and the mode of propulsion is, as a rule, by a process known as "legging." This means that the men propel the craft by working their legs along the sides of the tunnel.

For nearly the whole of the way along the banks of the canal there are wharves and public works, and the only green spots of interest one meets are when passing the borders of Victoria Park, Regent's Park, and Primrose Hill Park. After passing through the second tunnel, already referred to, we reached Paddington Basin, where we moored for the night, thereby completing the journey for this canal. The time occupied was just five hours, a very creditable achievement, taking into account the work to be performed and the stoppages with craft which have to be endured. Some letters have appeared in the Press about the condition of this canal. I was, therefore, surprised to learn that such fish as roach are actually to be caught, and that the canal water itself, on analysis, gave good results. Many of the lock-keepers have had long terms of service, and I understand they speak well of their health.

The Grand Junction Canal Co. from this point (Paddington Junction) hold sway, and our further

progress was through the Paddington Canal, or Arm, to Bull's Bridge, where it joins the main Grand Junction Canal, which has a length of 13½ miles. This part of the way calls for no particular comment further than that it is a well-maintained waterway, with ample water, as the heavy traffic demands. The places we passed were Kensal Green, Twyford (Park Royal, where the Royal Agricultural shows were held), and close to Wembley Park and Southall.

After going 3¾ miles to Cowley Peachey Junction on the Grand Junction Main Canal we entered the Slough Canal, which is five miles long, and we afterwards duly reached our destination, the day's run being 22½ miles. On these parts of the journey one chiefly encounters brickfields, the industry of brick-making being apparently the principal source of traffic. The Slough Canal terminates about half a mile or so from the Great Western Railway Station at what is called the basin, or some three or four miles from Windsor. Our arrival here occasioned considerable curiosity, for a motor boat, or any other such pleasure craft for the matter of that, had never been seen before in these parts, so far as could be ascertained.

After staying the night at the Royal Hotel, Slough, we turned " homeward bound," retracing our course to Cowley Peachey and Bull's Bridge, where we broke " new ground," and, coming down past Hanwell and the River Brent, we passed through a stretch of interesting scenery. One of the main features of interest on this tour was the total absence of locks for

35 miles on one part of the journey; in fact, I should think there are very few instances where so long an uninterrupted run can be obtained. At Norwood our first experience of locks on the Grand Junction began, there being no fewer than 12 in four miles. Having duly negotiated these, all the crew working, we got into the main stream at Brentford and Thames Locks, and made our way up river to Richmond (Surrey), where we put up the launch, and next day completed our tour at Chertsey, adding a further experience in our voyagings of "Round the Canals." It should be mentioned that the canals we travelled through are the properties of the Regent's Canal and Dock Co., and the Grand Junction Canal Co., who also control the Paddington and Slough branches. The trip was an enjoyable one, and, considering the nature of the route, it was of quite an educational and interesting character. The actual distances covered (with locks) are tabulated as follow:—

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st day | from | Chertsey | to | Surbiton | 11 | miles with | 3 locks |
| 2nd „ | „ | Surbiton | to | Regent's Canal ..... | 24¼ | „ „ | 2 „ |
| 3rd „ | „ | Regent's Canal | to | Paddington Basin | 8½ | „ „ | 13 „ |
| 4th „ | „ | Paddington Basin | to | Slough ..... | 22½ | „ „ | nil „ |
| 5th „ | „ | Slough | to | Richmond | 14¾ | „ „ | 12 „ |
| 6th „ | „ | Richmond | to | Chertsey ..... | 16 | „ „ | 5 „ |
| | | | | | Total | 97 miles with | 35 locks |

"BALGONIE" AT SHILLINGFORD BRIDGE,
On the Thames. [CRUISE V.
*Page* 29.

COSGROVE LOCK,
On the Grand Junction Canal. [CRUISE V.
*Page* 29.

PLATE X.

## V

## ROUND THE GRAND JUNCTION AND OXFORD CANALS. 250 Miles over interesting waterways in a 6 h.p. Daimler Launch.

THE trip described below was really our first and earliest experience of canal travelling. The novelty of the cruise greatly enhanced the enjoyment it gave to the crew, making it an ever memorable and pleasant holiday. Starting from Henley-on-Thames in our 27-foot petrol motor boat for Oxford, staying at Shillingford Bridge Hotel (a charming spot to stop at) our waterway experience began. Leaving Folly Bridge at noon on the Saturday—where, by the way, Mr. Salter, of Oxford fame, saw us off, giving us the necessary directions—we entered the Oxford Canal about a mile or so above the bridge, where the Canal company sent a man to let us into the first lock and to give us the necessary winch to open the locks with. Most of these locks one has to negotiate oneself, but this is rather a pleasure than a toil, as it varies the day's routine.

The party consisted of two friends, myself and two youths, one being the motor engineer and the other the handy man, who also attended to our inner requirements.

The Oxford Canal (to Braunston 54 miles, with 39 locks) one can easily manage, as the locks generally are not deep, and with good steering there is no difficulty. The locks are just wide enough to let the launch through comfortably (our beam is 6ft. 3in.), and I should mention that there are numerous low wooden bridges which are balanced and can be lifted from one end, but these we got through easily, as we had our top awning taken down. After passing many locks we reached Banbury (Oxon) about 9.30 p.m., having accomplished 27 miles, and here we moored our boat at the Canal Co.'s wharf.

On doing such a journey as this, one must be prepared for mishaps, and of these during the run we had our share. First of all we discovered we had lost one of our two propeller blades, and our boat suddenly started leaking at the stern tube. The loss of the blade did not affect us much, apart from the extra vibration, as we did 4 miles or more per hour—about as fast as one can travel in the Oxford Canal.

With regard, however, to the leak, this was more serious, as the boat nearly sank during the night. This cost us a lot of trouble, both to our engines and electric work. However, after getting assistance from a motor engineer and many willing hands to get the boat on to the hard, we eventually got under way about noon bound for Napton (Warwick). Banbury, I should say, is well worthy of a visit.

For those who have any appreciation of rural life and a desire to get away from everything for a time, such a trip as this is to be recommended, for the coun-

try surroundings are very interesting as one travels along. The delightful quietude away from the busy haunts of men is in itself a treat. I should think that during the whole canal journey of 150 miles, apart from the towns we stopped at and the barge folk we passed, we did not meet on an average one person to the mile.

Our intention was to stay at Napton (22 miles), but we had done so well, despite our late start, that we proceeded to Braunston (Northampton) 5 miles farther on, which place we reached about 9.30 p.m. The navigation between Napton and Braunston requires careful pilotage, as here the depth of water is not so great. One of our party was told off to look for rooms, but came back with the report that no accommodation was available, notwithstanding it is a good-sized village of 850 inhabitants. However, the landlord of one of the inns drove us to Daventry, some 4 miles distant, which we reached about 11.30, and found the town all quiet and asleep. We proceeded to the Peacock Hotel, where, after considerable knocking, we roused the landlord (a genial Scot), who took us in and gave us a welcome, and glad we were to receive a bread and cheese supper and to get to bed, but not before discussing everything with our host.

The next day, after our drive back to Braunston, we started on our journey by the Grand Junction Canal (93 miles, with 101 locks) to Brentford (Middlesex). The locks are numerous, but there are several long stretches on the levels which compensate for the work.

This was a most interesting day, and we covered 27

miles, including two tunnels of $1\frac{1}{4}$ and 2 miles respectively, in themselves constituting quite a novel experience. The first one we motored through, but for the other we took advantage of the tug which passes through about once every hour. The locks here on starting are very frequent, with a group of six locks in the course of $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles. Here we got the service of a bargee, who came to open these locks, and he made himself so useful as pilot and proved to be so full of local information that we took him all the way to our destination. After our experience at Braunston, the question arose as to where to sleep, and our pilot decided on Stony Stratford (Bucks), 28 miles down. We had a splendid day's work with the boat, but in the evening, when some 5 miles from our destination, our electric work went out of gear, and thence we had to use our tube ignition. Stony Stratford, a mile from the main canal, we reached at 11 p.m. Here two of us started on the hunt for rooms, and we were fortunate to find the landlord of the Cock Hotel had not retired to rest, and so he kindly provided us with the best the house could afford.

The next morning we were fortunate to get the assistance of an intelligent motor expert and electrician, who overhauled everything, and we proceeded at about noon on our journey, Leighton Buzzard (Bedfordshire), 18 miles, being our next stopping place, and this town we reached about 6 p.m. For the guidance of anyone doing the trip, it is as well to state that the towns, for a part of the way, are few and far between, and this we found rather awkward, as we

were rather pressed for time, otherwise with more leisure it would have been more satisfactory. We started early from Leighton Buzzard, as we had to encounter some heavy lock work. This, by the way, keeps one busy, and it is then that one benefits by having a full crew, which permits of turns being taken with the work. In the afternoon we reached Bulbourne (Herts), which is the engineering department of the Grand Junction Canal Co., and here we received every kindness from the management, who were good enough to do some repairs for us.

We then proceeded on our way, calling at Berkhampstead (Herts) for petrol, and afterwards reached Boxmoor (Herts) about 8 p.m., where we stopped for the night. The weather, which had been fine in the morning, turned out very wet in the afternoon, and this was the only inclement weather we experienced. On the Thursday, which was to be our last day on the canals, we made an 8 o'clock start, with 29 miles and innumerable locks before us. We went on well and reached Rickmansworth (Herts) at about noon, where we landed for some stores. The scenery for a distance below this is very fine; particularly coming through Cassiobury Park.

The canal traffic, when one gets towards Uxbridge (Middlesex), develops greatly, and this continues for the remainder of the journey to Brentford, which was duly reached by us at about 9 p.m., after passing a series of 12 locks grouped together, and finishing what was one of the pleasantest trips it has been my lot to undertake. In fact, given fine weather, a handy

crew, and ample time, one could not have a more interesting holiday.

The Grand Junction is a fine canal, with plenty of water, generally speaking, and is much wider than the Oxford Canal.

For our part, the trip was quite a revelation as regards canals and canal traffic. I was rather surprised in several places to learn that, with the exception of a few private launches on the canal, we were said to be the first pleasure craft to pass through this route. To do these canal journeys, it is advisable to go as early in the season as possible, to avoid the weeds, and to study the time when the moon is full, in case of any delays, which might necessitate late work. A piece of matting round the boat is advisable to prevent chafing in the locks and tunnels, and it is well also to look to your spare gear, etc., for the engines.

Our consumption of petrol for the canal journey was 24 gallons (Bowley's motor spirit). I should like to say that wherever we went we were shown the greatest kindness from everyone we came in contact with, the lock-keepers included, all through our tour.

I would just add, in finishing, that the counties we passed through en route were Oxon, Warwick, Northampton, Bedford, Bucks, Hertford and Middlesex.

Our canal runs were as follow :—

| | |
|---|---|
| Oxford to Banbury ... ... ... ... | 27 Miles. |
| Banbury to Braunston ... ... ... | 27 ,, |
| Braunston to Stony Stratford ... ... | 28 ,, |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Stony Stratford to Leighton Buzzard | 20 | Miles. |
| Leighton Buzzard to Boxmoor ... | 18 | ,, |
| Boxmoor to Brentford ... ... ... | 29 | ,, |
| | 149 | Miles. |

Making, with the Thames round of 101 miles, a total distance of 250 miles.

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Hotels recommended :—"White Lion," Banbury; "Peacock," Daventry; "Cock," Stony Stratford; "Swan," Leighton Buzzard; and "Heath Park," Boxmoor.

## VI

## THROUGH HERTFORDSHIRE ON THE RIVERS LEA AND STORT.

### 160 Miles by Motor Boat from Chertsey to Bishop's Stortford and back through Middlesex, Essex and Hertfordshire.

Our launch being in commission for the season, we directed our course to the Rivers Lea and Stort.

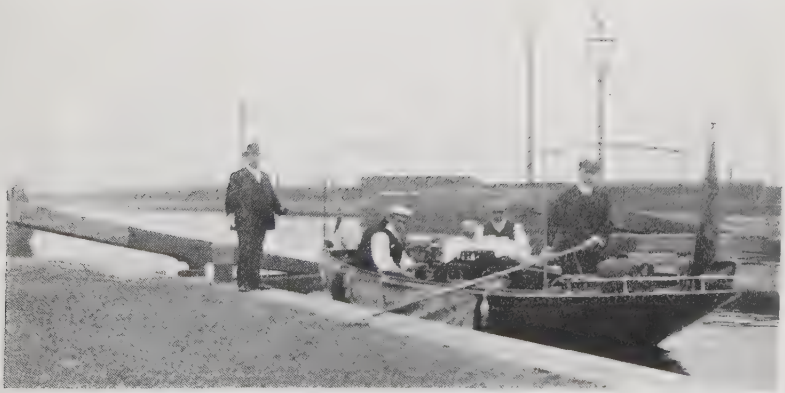
Under fine weather conditions, all being found to be well aboard the good ship, we made a mid-day start on our tour from Chertsey, making a run of some 12 miles down stream to Kingston-on-Thames.

Just below Hampton Court Bridge we met the procession of the British Motor Boat Club, who were holding their annual meet at Kingston, and being members of this august body, we hoisted the club's burgee, starboarded our helm and followed in the wake of the boats—a goodly number there were, under the command of the Commodore, Admiral Sir William Kennedy.

Stopping the night, we next morning proceeded on our way down to below London Bridge, some 21½ miles down stream, where we were to break our journey, and this destination we duly reached during the afternoon, everything going well, the engines acting splendidly, and the tide suiting admirably.

HERTFORD OLD TOWN MILL.

THE "BALGONIE" ON THE RIVER STORT.



ENTERING THE RIVER LEA,
Bow Creek Lock.

PLATE XI.

We have already described this route, and the only incident on our way was when, approaching London Bridge, the tide being three-quarters ebb and running fast, we observed broken water ahead. On reaching the broken water and at the speed we were going, we dived into what one of our passengers jocularly described as a tidal wave. We found we had shipped nearly a foot of water in our hold, and those sitting forward in the boat got completely drenched. On enquiry, we found there was a drop of some feet, and the swell is attributed, so we are told, to some remains of Old London Bridge still being there.

We hove to our craft at Billingsgate, got our bilges cleared, and then proceeded to our destination for the night.

On our third day, in charming weather, we continued our course down stream, leaving our halting place just below the Tower of London about 10.30 a.m. bound for Bow Creek—six miles distant—which leads to the River Lea some three miles farther on.

We took advantage of the last of the ebb tide, and by so doing reached the entrance referred to at dead low water, at the same time getting the quiet of the river at that time. We thus avoided the steamer and barge traffic. The only wash we had was from the L.C.C. steamers; however, our little cruiser behaved well on her deep water course. This was the lowest point on the Thames we had touched in our craft, which is hardly of the sea-going type, having navigated in all on this river, from Lechlade to Bow Creek, some 150 miles on previous occasions.

To motor up Bow Creek we had to wait for about an hour for the flood tide, as the entrance is rather silted up; so we moored at the Trinity House steamers' buoy.

Bow Creek is a busy commercial waterside centre, and is fully occupied on its banks with various industries, wharves, and railway companies' depots. Close to the entrance the Thames Ironworks and Shipbuilding Co. then had their large works, and although at low water the place does not in any way impress one, yet some of the largest battleships built have been launched from here.

The first lock we encounter is Bow, some three miles from the Thames and half-way up the creek, where the jurisdiction of the Thames Conservancy ends and that of the River Lea Conservancy begins. There are several small navigable creeks at the Thames end of the river, but the Lea proper or main course extends 25 miles from Old Ford Lock to Hertford, with 19 locks between.

For many miles from the start there are the same commercial environments, which continue right up to Lea Bridge, when the rural aspect and views become more and more interesting as progress is made.

The country all along is very flat and although the scenery never assumes anything of a striking character, still it is very pleasing indeed. We have had many experiences in all our wanderings, but, taking all places into account, generally speaking, the River Lea is well suited for motor boating. There is the

wide river with continuous deep water right up to the finish. The waterway is well maintained; likewise the locks are carefully equipped and tended by a very obliging set of officials.

All along the upper reaches there are great facilities for river recreations, and there are numerous boat-houses and even sailing clubs—Lea Bridge, Tottenham, Broxbourne, and Rye House being the chief resorts.

The motor boat, however, had not then reached these parts seriously. There were, however, a few about, we were led to understand; and our craft was one of the earliest that had passed on the through journey. The locks are numerous for the distance, running about every mile or so on an average, and this is, perhaps, the only drawback.

There is a striking similarity between the Medway and the River Lea so far as the ample supply of water is concerned, and likewise as to the surroundings in the upper reaches. There is also the barge traffic, which is chiefly carried on by horse towage.

We pass many towns en route, Ware (Herts) being one of the chief places. At this town there is a large malting business carried on, and the Lea comes in very useful for the conveyance of freights.

It seemed to me, being a believer in the advantages of waterside premises and corresponding cheap transit, that with all the agitation about canals, there was scope for manufactories along these river banks within such easy reach of London. The Great Eastern Railway, by the way, runs almost parallel the

whole of the course, and no doubt is a formidable competitor, but, we have found, in many instances, that where there is a canal there will be found also a railway running alongside. In such cases one means of communication competes against the other.

Our original programme was to stop for the night at Field's Weir—the junction of the River Stort—some seven miles from Hertford; but as the engines were giving a good account of themselves, the locks, too, being nearly all open, and the night being fine, we decided to proceed to Hertford, which place we duly reached about 9 p.m.

Coming into the town itself and meandering about in the dark, we at one point thought we had landed somewhere about a Venetian canal, and here we finished our day's cruise.

Hertford, the county town, has a population of 9,300, and a fine old place it is. We put up at the Dimsdale Arms Hotel—an ancient hostelry, dating back to the 15th century—and our comforts were well attended to by the genial landlord of the "Good old Dim."

Our short stay was a pleasant one, and we re-started next day on our journey with very pleasant recollections. Our usual good luck in the weather stood by us, and everything being satisfactory, we retraced our course to Field's Weir. The morning was fresh and spring-like, and the country was looking at its best.

On our way down, our curiosity led us to call at Rye House, a place reminiscent with old associations at

every footstep. The Rye House Plot is enlarged upon, and the Big Bed of Ware (said to have once accommodated some 24 travellers who had lost their last coach) is to be seen here, and is looked upon in wonderment by the many excursionists who visit these parts. As a house of call one would really be surprised at the number who find their way here.

We now come to the River Stort—14 miles long, already referred to. It is much narrower than the Lea, and does not assume the proportions of its neighbour in any way. It is very tortuous, and leads through many pleasing glimpses of scenery as one proceeds. Somehow or other, on this trip, from guide-books and from other references to both these rivers, we were not led to expect anything further than a very ordinary waterway, so that, like the proverb, "he that expecteth little shall not be disappointed." To our surprise, however, all through this journey the scenery was more pleasing, and with regard to the Stort itself, we were all delighted with the views that presented themselves, being of so distinctly rural a character that we all appreciated our new acquaintance with this river.

The charm of the Stort is its extreme quietude, and the general lie of the land gives one the impression of travelling over green fields, in itself a delightful experience.

This waterway seems to have had various owners in past times, and it was then the property of Sir Walter Gilbey. There are 15 locks in all, and although of a crude character, they are not difficult to negotiate.

After our efforts of the previous day, when we accomplished some 34 miles, we were glad to get the quiet, and took things more leisurely, enjoying nature to the full. Here again, as on all other waterways, one is out of the world, away beyond human ken, and life appears worth living amidst such congenial surroundings.

We pass such places as Roydon, Harlow, and Sawbridgeworth, all interesting spots, the end of our day's journey being Bishop's Stortford (Herts), where we finish up a most enjoyable day's outing. We made our way through this goodly-sized town of some 5,000 inhabitants, and rested for the night at the George Hotel.

Here, on the following morning, we had reluctantly to part with two of our crew, as the City, they assured us, demanded their services. One of these had acted as our chef and provided us with hot accessories on board, which were appreciated and added increased zest to our appetites.

At the first lock to the River Stort the eye meets a formidably worded old notice board, which reads as follows :—

" The punishment for tampering with these works is
" penal servitude.

" By Order."

and farther on our journey a similar intimation is observed, but instead of penal servitude, the punishment is " transportation."

This notice struck terror into the hearts of our crew, and altogether it had a salutary effect, and glad we

were to get free from the clutches of the law, and this in Merrie England, too, in the 20th century.

Homeward bound was the order on this our fifth day. We had to study our remaining distances to get out at Limehouse Cut and to enable us to catch the tidal way, so we broke our journey at Ponder's End, where we got housed for the night. In doing the same river twice—that is coming back the reverse way—it always appears to be a new experience owing to the different aspect of the views. We had a pleasant run down, although the water in the Stort, on account of the mills working, was low. We only stopped once this day, and that to overhaul the engine and repair a spring on the inlet valve. Fortunately we had a spare one with us, and, after replacement, we sped merrily on our way.

As to the advantage of spare gear being carried on board, especially on such voyages through unknown country where one may not meet a living soul for miles, the benefit in this instance was at once apparent and important. Had we not had this, our progress would have been very seriously retarded. One feature to-day was our good fortune in having about three-quarters of the locks en route in our favour. We mention this as in many previous instances we have had, as it happens, very bad luck in having the locks against us.

As on the Lea, the G.E.R. runs alongside the whole of the Stort to Bishop's Stortford.

We commenced our journey next morning in lovely weather from Ponder's End—by no means an inviting

place to the tourist—our destination being the Upper Thames. On such trips, we should say the stopping place is always more or less a difficulty, and glad we have been at times to get accommodation at all.

Close to Tottenham Lock there is a large swimming bath some 60ft. by 20ft. erected by the local authorities. This is one of the largest open air baths in the country, and many take advantage of it in the season. This shows the popularity of such an institution, and it is a pity that like places are not to be found more often in our country. The fact of being able to swim inspires confidence at once, especially in those who indulge in waterside pastimes.

The River Lea, it should be mentioned, is largely drawn on for water supply purposes, and at intervals along the route there is what is known as the River Lea Diversion, running parallel, which is used for any overflow and for storage purposes.

Just above the Old Ford Lock, about three miles from the Thames, the Hertford Union—also known as Duckett's Canal—is passed. It is about one and a quarter miles in length, and forms an important link and junction with the Regent's Canal, as by that route one can travel the through route from Hertford to the the North of England.

We proceeded on our way to Bromley Lock, some 9½ miles down, which is the junction for Limehouse Cut. The latter, 1½ miles long, is a short route to the Thames. This outlet brings one to the lower pool, some 4½ miles nearer London Bridge than the alterna-

tive route by Bow Creek. All along this latter part of the way there are similar wharves and manufactories. And so we reach Old Father Thames, once again being locked out at Limehouse Lock about 4 p.m. The tide being now in flood and everything favourable—the weather perfect—we decided to continue our journey up stream.

We had a most enjoyable trip to Twickenham, our destination for the night, having done 30½ miles with only 10 locks. Our time from Limehouse Cut to Twickenham at 20 miles was about 2¼ hours, equal to nearly nine miles per hour—not a bad run for a small 6 h.p. Daimler motor boat.

On our seventh and last day we reached Chertsey—14½ miles—our final destination, greatly pleased with this voyage of exploration.

Our only regret in finishing this tour was the fact that there were no further canals available to explore from the River Thames as a base, within a radius, say, of about 100 miles. The holiday had been a very successful one, and being favoured with exceptionally fine weather, this important factor increased our enjoyment.

Apart from the pleasure of such a cruise, the geographical and commercial interest is great. When once under way, all thoughts of business life disappear; besides, one gets the healthful benefit of being continuously in the open.

The Lea has ancient historical associations, as we learn that the Danes sailed up this river to Hertford in 894, and we also know that barges were navigated to

Bishop's Stortford in 1769—a "far cry" from the advent of the motor boat on these waters.

These rivers are well worth a visit, and the Lea as a good navigable river was quite an eye-opener to us. If there were many waterways with such natural advantages, there would be no occasion for holding Royal Commissions on canals.

In such inland travelling, the earlier in the season one starts the better, as the weed trouble which might be encountered in the higher and less frequented reaches is avoided. We, however, experienced no difficulty whatever in this respect, and possibly on this navigation one gets "fresher" water in the lower reaches than later on in the year.

The following is a table of the distances on the route travelled :—

| | Miles. | Locks. |
|---|---|---|
| 1st day—Chertsey to Kingston (Thames) ... | 12 | 3 |
| 2nd day—Kingston to London Bridge (below) ... ... ... ... ... | 21½ | 2 |
| 3rd day—London Bridge to Hertford (Lea) via Bow Creek ... ... ... ... | 34 | 19 |
| 4th day—Hertford to Field's Weir ... ... | 7 | 4 |
| ,, Field's Weir to Bishop's Stortford (Stort) ... ... ... ... | 14 | 15 |
| 5th day—Bishop's Stortford to Field's Weir (Lea) ... ... ... ... | 14 | 15 |
| ,, Field's Weir to Ponder's End ... | 9½ | 9 |
| 6th day—Ponder's End to Limehouse Cut (Thames) ... ... ... ... ... | 11 | 7 |
| ,, Limehouse Cut to Twickenham ... | 20 | 1 |
| 7th day—Twickenham to Chertsey ... ... | 15 | 4 |
| | 158 | 79 |

## VII

# THE GRAND SURREY CANAL ON THE LOWER THAMES.

FOLLOWING on our "Round the Canals" experiences, I have since traversed the Grand Surrey Canal, which I venture to think the average Londoner knows little of. It enters from the Surrey Commercial Docks, and is the only canal on the south side of the Lower Thames, its destination being Camberwell, some four and a half miles from the start. In its course it proceeds through the localities of Rotherhithe, Deptford, Old Kent Road, Bermondsey to Walworth and Camberwell. Apart from the lock on entering, there are no others to be encountered en route. The canal itself, like others of this description, is, of course, purely of a commercial character, and is the means of transport for goods of all descriptions, such as petroleum, tar, wood, hemp, iron goods, and coal to the numerous wharves along its banks, the coal being chiefly delivered to the South Metropolitan Gas Co., which has a large depot at Old Kent Road. Rowing boats, to be seen on some canals, are unknown here, and the green fields of Surrey are now only a distant memory. Even the luxury of bathing is prohibited under such a heavy penalty as five pounds for each "offence," so that the pleasure-seeker has little scope here.

The waterway, although short, is a fine one, and is kept in good condition, and has a greater depth of water than is usually found in canals. Towards the end of the journey there is a branch to Peckham known as the Peckham Arm, about half a mile in length, and I believe at one time there was also another branch to Croydon—what appears to have been at one time the Grand Surrey and Croydon Canal—but this latter is now a thing of the past. It has ceased to exist as a canal, a railway company having taken it over. The Grand Surrey Canal was, in 1864, taken over and amalgamated with the Surrey Commercial Dock Company, who control and manage it. It therefore forms an important adjunct for the distribution of merchandise in these parts.

One would little think that this short waterway is the means of conveying thousands of tons yearly to the wharves along its banks, and it leads one to wonder why, in times gone by, there were not others of a like description made where waterborne goods could be carried right to their destination. We think the foregoing may be of some little interest to readers, although it is rather outside the routine of previous experiences.

ON THE UPPER MEDWAY,
Near Tonbridge.

CRUISE VIII.
*Page* 49.

APPROACHING EAST FARLEIGH LOCK,
On the Medway.

PLATE XII.

[CRUISE VIII.
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## VIII

# ON THE MEDWAY FROM CHATHAM TO TONBRIDGE.

With an early Eastertide and having a spell of exceptional weather, we decided to spend our holiday afloat on the River Medway this time.

To avoid the Bank Holiday crowd, we varied our route to Chatham part of the way by coming down the Thames in the London and Edinburgh Shipping Co.'s fine passenger steamer "Fiona," bound for the Port of Leith, which dropped us with the pilot at Gravesend, some 25 miles below London Bridge. This made an enjoyable break in the journey, and to one who likes things nautical it is always full of interest. Aboard this good ship we were royally entertained by the genial captain. The engineer on board informed us that this steamer was then the fastest single-propellered boat of her size afloat—a proud boast to be sure.

After staying overnight at the Sun Hotel, we left Chatham under delightful weather conditions at low water, so as to get the benefit of the tidal way as far as Allington Lock, some two miles from Maidstone, our destination for the day's journey.

The Medway from the points mentioned cannot be described as beautiful, until you approach Ayles-

ford Bridge, where the scenery becomes more pleasing. No doubt the lower reaches at one time were more attractive, before the days of the development of that huge industry all round about this neighbourhood, viz., the making of cement, but leaving aside the scenery, from a commercial point of view one must indeed be surprised at the vastness of the manufactories and the consequent traffic on the river with sailing and other barges conveying the cement to its respective destinations.

The traffic altogether is very heavy up to Maidstone, with its fine natural waterway, and we were informed that sometimes at Allington Lock (which is a large double one) over 1,000 tons of cargo are locked through at one tide.

Our crew, we should mention, consisted of the proverbial " three men in a boat," and a right good crew, too.

We landed several times on our run during the day at such villages or towns as Wouldham, Halling, and Aylesford, partially also to wait for the tide, as we got ahead of it and had to wait for water in places even in a shallow-draught boat like ours. Here at high water, however, there is up to 20ft., which enables barges of from 150 to 200 tons to come up so far, and fine, well-maintained craft they are.

At Wouldham, by the way, we came across, in the churchyard, a tombstone erected to a purser on board the " Victory," in whose arms Lord Nelson died at the battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

Maidstone we duly reached about 6 p.m., having

done 14½ miles with one lock, as already described. Kent's county town has some 35,000 inhabitants, and is typically English, altogether an interesting place. Here we were well cared for and made comfortable at "Ye Anciente Bell Hotel," an old-world type of hostelry, in contradistinction to the modern up-to-date houses.

It is an interesting record that Samuel Pepys, of Diary fame, patronized "Ye Bell" in the year 1669, whilst on a visit to Maidstone, when he refers to the good fare and hospitality he then received. Pepys had journeyed from Chatham to Maidstone like ourselves, but by the old-fashioned chaise and not by the water route of the present voyagers.

The River Medway is under the jurisdiction of several bodies, and extends 43 miles from Tonbridge, the navigable source, to Sheerness, where it joins the estuary of the River Thames.

Next day, in most perfect weather, we made a nine o'clock start from Maidstone for Tonbridge, 16 miles ahead and with 13 locks to negotiate.

After our previous day's experience amongst the cement works, with their formidable-looking canopies, we were surprised to find that with every mile we went ahead we ran into more and more agreeable scenery, which was really picturesqueness itself, with pleasant surroundings. To add to the charm we had practically all the river to ourselves—on a Bank Holiday too! A dozen boats or so were all we came across on these upper reaches.

The river all through from the start is very tor-

tuous, and this adds appreciably to the glimpses of scenery. Along the latter portion of the route the hopfields of the "Garden of England" are much in evidence. Ten miles on our journey we stopped at Branbridges for lunch, at the Rose and Crown Inn—an out-of-the-world place.

Proceeding on our way we found on approaching New Lock that the gates were damaged, so we had to lift our boat round by the lock, no easy job, even although we had procured plenty of assistance.

The locks, by the way, generally speaking, are rather hard to work, and are handled by a long iron crowbar; we borrowed one from a tugman at the first lock at Allington. As we found there was considerable delay in their opening we chartered a man to work these for us for the greater part of the way, and this very much facilitated our progress.

Now our cruise comes to an end, and with many regrets we reach our destination—the Castle Hotel at Tonbridge—late in the afternoon, after having had a "real good time," the holiday having been a success in every way.

For the motor boat on this river there is a future, as the conditions are good. The excellent depth and regularity of the width of the river is surprising, considering Tonbridge is some 40 miles from Sheerness. Taking into account the lovely scenery, being away from everybody, and with such surroundings, what could be more enjoyable? In fact one would think it had only to be better known to be taken more advantage of.

The skiff we sent back to Chatham by sailing barge, and we duly reached town, very tired but very contented. As for the Bank Holiday, we really were practically quite unaware of the holding of such a "festival," and so near to London. With such a waterway near at hand we can heartily recommend such a trip to the many motor boat owners on the Thames, even though their own river affords such splendid and varied scenery.

## IX

# THROUGH HANTS AND SURREY BY THE WOKING, ALDERSHOT, AND BASINGSTOKE CANAL.

After our canal trip through the Midland and Home Counties we decided to extend our experience by exploring the Woking, Aldershot, and Basingstoke Canal. Our intention had been to use our petrol launch, but this we were told would be impossible, owing to the condition of the canal, although we were given to understand that it would be developed. We, therefore, had our skiff sent on from Henley-on-Thames to Basingstoke (Hants) by rail, and on our arrival there we found the boat afloat, all ready for us. Our crew consisted of "Three men in a Boat," with a youth to assist generally. The Basingstoke Canal is 38½ miles to the Wey navigation, and has 29 locks. These latter, however, are not reached until nearly two-thirds of the journey have been completed, so that one gets a good level run of about 20 miles before approaching them. The first few miles down were in such a condition owing to the weeds that we found sculling impossible, and had to be towed down by horse as far as Odiham (Hants). Five and a half miles from the start we came to the Greywell

THE GREYWELL TUNNEL,
On the Basingstoke Canal.

[CRUISE IX.
*Page* 54.

BRIDGE ON THE RIVER ROTHER.

[CRUISE
*Page*

PLATE XIII.

Tunnel, three-quarters of a mile long, and the bargemen, in navigating their craft through, have to lie on their backs and "tread" their way from the ceiling.

The water here is as clear as crystal, the tunnel being full of natural springs. This is one of the chief sources from which the canal derives its water supply. The time taken in paddling through was exactly 20 minutes, and it was a bit of work which our party appreciated thoroughly.

Odiham being duly reached, we hied to the village, some half-mile or so from the waterside, and found it a quaint interesting old place. The George Hotel, which we visited for afternoon tea, has some ancient oak panelling brought from an old Bishop's palace in the vicinity. On our way down from here we came through some fine wooded reaches, which in some cases quite came up to what we were led to expect. Below Odiham the canal was comparatively clear of weeds, and we quite enjoyed our scull down to Fleet (Hants), where we had engaged rooms at the Oaksheaf Hotel for the night. The distance covered was some sixteen miles, of which we sculled about ten. Proceeding the following day, we pulled down to Aldershot (Hants), four miles, where we landed, and made a detour round the camp and town, an interesting sight.

Below this our first lock was encountered—Ash—after which we passed through Laffan's Plain, where the military reviews are held, and afterwards reached Frimley Lock, where we again passed some finely-wooded parts. At this place our boat was left in charge of the lock-keeper, to be conveyed to St. John's

Lock, six miles lower down, as the 22 locks along that stretch were not at that time in working order.

We stayed for the night at the Brookwood Hotel (Surrey), walking there via Pirbright, a pretty rural country walk along the canal side. Thereafter we came through a series of six locks, passing some attractive scenery, with rich foliage, and duly reached the Wey navigation, thus completing our voyage of exploration of the Basingstoke Canal, and finishing up what had been a pleasant three days' holiday under exceptionally favourable weather conditions.

From a business point of view, it struck us that if such a canal as this could only be deepened it would make a fine through waterway from London, via the Thames.

## X

## THROUGH SUSSEX BY THE RIVERS ROTHER AND ARUN. From Midhurst on the Rother to Littlehampton on the Arun.

FOLLOWING on our experiences we resolved to do the Rivers Rother and Arun, and a surprisingly delightful trip it turned out to be. We trained to Midhurst on the L.B. and S.C. Railway late in the afternoon to find our boat awaiting us, as previously arranged.

This we procured from Mr. Port, the local boatman, and, strangely enough, in all his experience of some ten years back, he had never let a boat for such a through journey, although we did hear of one crew that came up stream, so the Rother is left severely alone in this respect.

The Rother rises at Empshott, in Hants, and flows 30 miles in all, but is only navigable for such a type of craft as ours, from Midhurst for some 12 miles down to Stopham Lock, just above Pulborough, at the junction with the Arun.

This river, at one time, had been canalized, in so far that there are seven locks in that distance, but these are all totally in disuse now, and entail very heavy and troublesome portages thereat, sometimes

extending to, say, 50 yards or more. Then again some miles down shallows are encountered, this necessitating careful navigation.

In our journey we were fortunate with the volume of water, owing to previous floods, and the current assisted us very much on our way. There are several small weirs, which, however, we just managed to negotiate without lifting out the boat. All this made a variety in the day's pleasure, but it entailed hard work.

At Moorland Lodge Brick Locks, had we not had the kindly assistance of two young farmers (whose residence was close by), who accompanied us a part of the way giving further help, we should have had some trouble in getting along. Moreover, our crew was one short, "our ship's surgeon" having lost the train and missed his connection with the party. This brought the fact home that in doing the Rother two things are necessary, and these are a light boat and a full crew.

This is one of the most charming little rivers for its size one could find, and all along the valley one comes through varied picturesque views, showing beautiful, well-wooded scenery. The weather, too, being very fine after a spell of sunless days, made us appreciate everything all the more. The waterway tourist has the novel advantage of seeing the country from the river point of view as he passes along; a unique advantage and one which is consequently the privilege of the few.

The only other obstacle we came across so far was

a floating bridge at Kelsham, a mile from our stopping place. This can be opened by raising up one end, but we just lifted the boat over the platform.

Shortly after this we came to Coultershaw Lock, just adjacent to Petworth Station, and here we moored our craft for the night, under the bridge at the mill; then proceeded to the town of Petworth, itself some 1½ miles from the lock.

The distance travelled—7½ miles—took us 3½ hours, in which we had three portages.

We were very comfortably accommodated at the Swan Hotel, and ready we were for our late supper after our exertions.

Petworth is a very quaint old-world place, and has a population of some 2,300 inhabitants. It has many old-fashioned buildings and a market square, and agriculture seems to be the chief industry.

Here Lord Leconfield holds sway. Petworth House, his mansion, is of a fine type, and it is said the walls round the estate extend to some 14 miles.

We came across several persons who remembered the time when navigation was carried right up to Midhurst from Littlehampton. We also heard of an Oxford rowing man who at one time pulled from Oxford, via Godalming and the Wey and Arun Canal and Stopham Lock, to Midhurst.

Next morning, in fine weather, we continued our progress down stream from Coultershaw Lock, having driven there from Petworth. The river from here is very tortuous and wants careful steering, besides

which we had to avoid the overhanging branches across the river.

In bygone times, when commerce was conducted on these waters, the haulage of the barges was done by horses, but all traces have now disappeared of the towpath.

That day we came over some more shallows, shot some more weirs, and did three more portages, all tending to keep us busy and on the alert.

Fittleworth Lock and Mill we arrived at in due course, and landed to see the Artists' Room in the Swan Hotel, celebrated in those parts, as being the haunt of artists. The room, of panelled oak, is full of studies from the brushes of many well-known artists, and these are alone well worthy of a special visit, some of the examples being very fine indeed. The value of these pictures is very much enhanced by the fact that in a great many cases they are painted direct on to the actual panels referred to.

The signboard of the Swan is of special interest, being painted on both sides by R. Caton Woodville, and is much valued.

To our surprise, when ashore here, the missing passenger—the doctor—unexpectedly turned up, and right glad were we to see him, as, apart from medical advice, he was the strong man of the party. He had followed on by the next train to ours, and since then had been careering all over the countryside in his endeavours to find, what was to him, the " phantom ship."

The scenery is more or less varied on the route to

Stopham, which was our last lock, with a further portage, and a severe one it is. Below this point we at last came to the junction of the Rother and the Arun.

After all our experiences on the Rother, we were rather satisfied with ourselves, considering the fact that the trip, so far as we were told, had not been accomplished for many years back, with the exception referred to. Our successful attempt certainly amply repaid us.

The distance is only about a dozen miles in all, but this took us about eight hours to do, owing to the sculling being continually interrupted by the disused locks, weirs, portages, and overhanging branches causing obstruction and making progress very slow.

The Rother, I may add, does not vary much so far as width is concerned.

After a short distance from the junction, we came to Pulborough, a good-sized market town of about 1,700 inhabitants, and here we did justice to lunch at the Swan Hotel. Still another Swan, as the reader will note—a favourite cognomen in these parts, but oddly enough the swans themselves are not plentiful, only half-a-dozen or so being observed throughout. We were much amused at one swan, who was so scared at our presence, that he forsook his mate and cygnets and travelled fully a couple of miles ahead of us, and, although we endeavoured to stay his progress, it was only through becoming exhausted that he had eventually to give up and let us go by.

And now the Arun—so well known by name—was our next water. It rises in St. Leonard's Forest, five

summer months for visitors, and has an attractive golf course. This latter is on the west side of the river, which is crossed by a ferry, but, in addition, a bridge is now available. As we had ample time, after our short stay at Littlehampton, we decided to motor back by the "Gwendoline," and in doing this journey we encountered the full force of the tidal stream referred to, and our craft had difficulty at times in forging ahead. However, Arundel we duly reached, making a pleasant change after our hard work. On this part of the river we passed a powerful racing motor boat—"Challenger," it turned out to be—doing some 16 knots, we were told.

Our next move was to train from Arundel to Pulborough, to finish that part of the Arun above the junction; thence to Pallingham Quay, for which we chartered another skiff. We took with us a boatman —A. Strudwick by name, who, by the way, would be of service to intending tourists in these parts, as one may say he has been born and bred on the water, and we found he gave us interesting local lore of bygone times.

The four miles or so up here are well worth seeing, and there are some distinctly attractive spots, with plenty of foliage, particularly at Stopham Bridge; and so we reach Pallingham Quay, the highest point for our type of craft, although canoes may have got to New Bridge through the weeds in earlier days.

We here dispensed with the skiff and took an "overland route" from Pallingham Lock to New Bridge, by the banks—our destination, some four

miles farther on. At Pallingham Quay it is of considerable interest to note that the first lock is here of the derelict Wey and Arun Canal, which ran to Godalming, some 32 miles on, and formed a through connection with the River Wey to the Thames, and from here we stuck to the old towpath along the old canal, and had a particularly pleasant ramble along its banks, which revived associations of its past, when it was once a busy water thoroughfare.

This canal had its inception about 1813 and ceased to exist in 1868 through the absence of traffic. Our waterman, Strudwick, it is interesting to note, travelled through this canal as a bargeman when a youth, and his father also did service on both the River Rother and the Portsmouth and Arundel Canal.

The River Arun, by the way, runs as nearly parallel as possible to this canal; in fact, it was never lost sight of on our journey all the way to New Bridge, and the two waterways meet there within a few yards.

We finished our "water" journey at this point, and thereafter took to the road for Billinghurst, some 2 miles farther on, where we supped at the Railway Hotel, and from there got back to town after a most successful and enjoyable trip.

Our walk along the bank was such that to us it seemed to open up a new source of pleasure by traversing the *disused* canals in England, with their unfrequented routes and scenes; and another thing, too, one is practically always walking on the level!

The Rother is particularly worth doing, even with all its difficulties, and the Arun, too, is a fine navi-

gable river, with pleasant rural surroundings and fine scope for motor boating, and by accomplishing these journeys we have done these rivers to the full so far as it is possible. And so closes another delightful acquaintance with our inland waters.

Distances traversed.—River Rother: Midhurst to Stopham (near Pulborough), 12 miles.

River Arun: New Bridge to Littlehampton, 26 miles.

Total, 38 miles.

AT THAMES HEAD,
The Source of the River Thames.
(1) Thames Head Tree; (2) and (4) Bridges near the Source;
(3) At Thames Head under the "T.H." Tree.

PLATE XIV. [CRUISE XI.

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## XI

# TO THAMES HEAD—THE SOURCE OF THE THAMES—BY MOTOR-CAR.

HAVING navigated the River Thames with all its creeks and tributaries from Cricklade (Wilts) to the Nore by motor boat or other craft, I at last carried out my wish to explore that unnavigable portion of the river up stream some ten miles from Cricklade to near the Thames Head village of Kemble. At this latter place is the source of the river, at a spot, Trewsbury Mead, not far from Cirencester. I may as well give a description of our detour, which was in this instance chiefly undertaken by motor-car — a 14-16 h.p. Darracq. We left Shillingford Bridge Hotel, Berkshire, early on a September afternoon, and after passing Oxford, with its many fine colleges, we shortly came to the old English town of Faringdon, then passed through Lechlade, in Gloucestershire, and at length we reached Cricklade, the base of our operations.

It being early evening, we decided to make a start on our quest at once; so, accompanied by Lieut. Hawes, R.N.R. (a Thames Conservancy official), and my wife, we wended our way on foot to negotiate the

reaches of the Upper Thames by the riverside. We endeavoured to procure information from "locals" as to our route, but the replies were of the haziest description; in fact, not to be relied upon, which clearly showed that our excursion was not a common one.

It is interesting to note that at this point—Cricklade Town Bridge—the jurisdiction of the Thames Conservancy commences, and extends some 200 miles to Yantlet Creek, in the county of Kent. The river here would be some 30 feet, but the width varies according to the season of the year.

All went well for the first mile or so, when our progress was rudely checked by a canal viaduct. This turned out to be the now abandoned North Wilts Canal, being the Swindon branch to the Thames-Severn Canal of the Wilts and Berks Canal—now also in disuse—which I may mention led from the Thames at Abingdon to the Kennet and Avon Canal at Semington.

Here our progress came to a deadlock, and the question was how to get over the canal, and it was only after walking some considerable distance that we were enabled to cross the waterway, and that by the aid of a plank. From a solitary cottage we got the assistance of a young farm labourer, who lent his services to help us so far on our way. Darkness, however, set in rather rapidly, and as we found more and more obstacles ahead, we completely lost our bearings. We had ordered the car to meet us for the return journey near Waterhay Bridge, which we felt could not be far off. After groping about the surrounding fields for

an hour and a half, and lighting matches at different points to discover our whereabouts, we at last found an outlet, and it was with much relief that we saw a light ahead and heard voices in the distance. The light came from a small farm, where the good people of the house gave us the necessary directions. We were within measurable distance of the spot where the car was awaiting us, as it proved.

Next forenoon we motored to the same spot and resumed our journey on foot, sending on the car to pick us up. The river at this point was quite a respectable-looking stream, but not so wide as we found it at the start. After progressing some distance we made for Ashton Keynes, a primitive little village, where the car was awaiting us. We then pursued our course to view the waterway and the respective bridges on our route up stream.

As we progressed to the higher reaches, the width of the river gradually became less and less; in fact, in some places the water was only visible in patches, until it practically disappeared.

Reaching Thames Head Bridge on the Thames and Severn Canal, we left the car and walked along that picturesque part of the canal for about half a mile till we came to some typically rural cottages on the farther bank, and hereabouts was our destination. After scaling a wall by the canal side, we scrambled down the steep and rough hillside, and after some little difficulty we were pleased to discover the famous tree at Thames Head, bearing the mystic letters " T.H." cut thereon, with the King's arrow overhead. The

object of our expedition achieved, we celebrated the event by quaffing a bottle of champagne at this historic spot, and drank to the health of good Old Father Thames. It seemed difficult to realize that here in this secluded mead we were at the source of that great river which commercially is the most important in the world.

The tree at Thames Head—an ash—is of considerable height, and is partly entwined with ivy. There are at its base a number of stone slabs, and here in the winter time the stream comes gurgling through. There is, however, no trace at all of any waterway course. It must be mentioned, however, that there is a pumping station near at hand which pumped all the available water into the Thames and Severn Canal for navigation purposes. This canal, by the way, had not been in use for some time, and contained much less water than when the writer traversed it by motor boat some five years previously on a voyage from the Thames to the Severn and back to the Thames again by another canal route.

After our Thames Head experience, we motored to Sapperton, where there is the second longest canal tunnel in England, and there the view from the Daneway end, looking down to the Golden Valley, near Stroud, is perhaps as picturesque as one could wish. Later in the afternoon we commenced the return journey, by way of Cirencester to Lechlade, and the same evening brought our novel trip to a successful termination.

APPROACHING THE ROLLERS,
On the River Cherwell.

[CRUISE XII.
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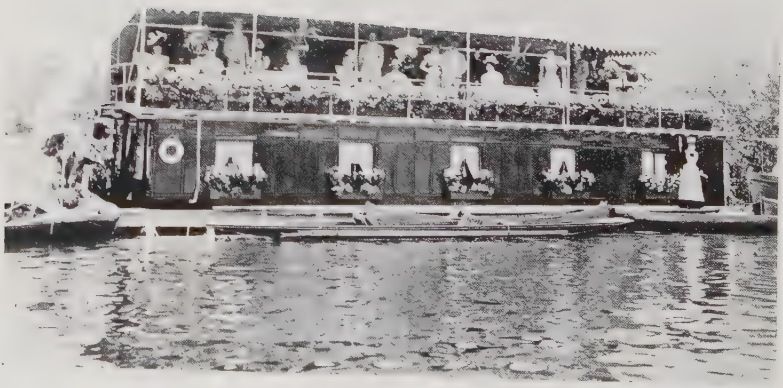

OUR HOUSEBOAT "CLYTIE"
On the Thames.

PLATE XV.

[CRUISE XII.
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## XII

# A BOATING EXCURSION ON THE RIVER CHERWELL (OXON).

To the ordinary boating man doing the River Thames, the Cherwell is only a name, and when I explored this tributary, I had navigated the Thames practically in every way from Thames Head, near Cirencester, to the Nore, and all its creeks, canals, and docks, by motor boat and other types of craft. As to a description of the Thames itself, and the pleasures to be had on its stream, much has already been written and more will doubtless yet appear. I can say I have spent the most pleasurable days of my life on good Old Father Thames, having done the river in every way, even to residing on its waters in a snug houseboat.

But to come back to the Cherwell. Being in the vicinity of Oxford, I chartered a skiff from Messrs. Salter Brothers, and with a crew of three embarked on a fine sunny day in September for our little excursion.

The passer-by on the Thames, seeing the modest-looking bridge close to the University Boat Club barge would hardly realize that this is where the Cherwell flows out to the main river, about a quarter of a mile or so down from Folly Bridge, and here we enter on our river course.

The water was unfortunately rather low, after the long summer drought, and it looked as if our journey would not be of long duration, but as we proceeded the depth became greater, which made the conditions more satisfactory for sculling.

At length we reached the part known as the Rollers, some three miles from our start, where we had the boat carried a few yards over to the upper reach. To our surprise the river here assumed a wider form, with a considerably greater depth of water, which is accounted for by the water being held up at this point.

What also struck us was the number of canoes, punts and skiffs afloat, the crews sporting themselves —or as the local expression has it—"slacking on the Cher"—in these shady reaches, which, we might say, are almost unknown to ordinary boating men. We came across several camping parties too, and numerous picnic gatherings on the banks, making it not unlike a miniature regatta scene, and showing that the Cherwell was fully taken advantage of by the local inhabitants.

The boating man is well provided with craft here, for, apart from the Oxford firm, there are two boat-letting establishments on the upper stretches with equipment equal to those on the Thames.

As we wended our way along we passed Magdalen Bridge and College, and we were reminded that the Choristers of this College keep up an ancient and quaint custom of singing a Morning Hymn at 5 a.m. on May morning, on the top of Magdalen Tower.

We next came to the University Park which borders

the course, and then to a couple of bathing stations—one known as Parsons Pleasure—where the Oxonians do their swimming exercises. Farther on we noticed some unpretentious hotels and refreshment stands, all signifying the fact that the pleasure seeker is well catered for in these parts.

The Cherwell rises some three miles from Charweltown in Northamptonshire, a few miles, by the way, from the source of the River Nene, and flows in all some 45 miles south, and through Oxfordshire, passing Banbury on the way, till it joins the Thames as already described. It is said to be navigable from Kirklington Weir, near Bletchington Station on the G.W. Railway, for 14 miles down.

Although our intention was to get to Islip Mill, seven miles up stream, we were only enabled, owing to the state of the water and the weeds on the upper reaches, to scull to Water Eaton Bridge, seven miles from the start. It is interesting to note that this primitive little village was the birthplace of King Edward the Confessor. Here our voyage came to an end. At this point we had a waterman from Salter's to meet us to row the boat back the return journey to Folly Bridge.

Some few miles higher up stream the Cherwell becomes part of the Oxford Canal, which is followed to advantage for some seven furlongs along the waterway.

The trip, although a short one, was thoroughly enjoyed by the crew, and the scenery was of an attractive character, the bushes showing good foliage right

down the river banks. From Water Eaton we continued our way by land by the riverside and soon reached Islip, our destination.

It should be mentioned that there are no locks on the Cherwell, but in navigating the upper reaches there are several portages necessary, at the Mills and other places.

From here we returned to Oxford by motor-car, which had been sent on ahead to join us, and so we finished what was a very pleasant outing.

## XIII

# FROM CANTERBURY TO RAMSGATE ON THE GREAT STOUR.

Our travels hitherto have been mainly the larger navigable canals and rivers, but we find there are still some smaller, yet important, waterways, that are well worth doing. Such were the Avon (Warwickshire), the Rother, Arun, and the Great Stour, the last-named being now under notice in this article. There are a number of rivers of this name in England, but this one rejoices in the higher-sounding appellation of the "Great Stour." The river has an ancient record, as we read that an Act was passed in 1514 placing the River Stour navigation under the care of the town of Canterbury. It flows from the town of Ashford—up to which place it was at one time navigable from there—some 38 miles down to Pegwell Bay, near to Ramsgate. We found that it would be impossible for our class of boat—of the Thames skiff type—to be used in these higher reaches, with the many shallows and mill portages; besides, the water is preserved in many places for fishing purposes, so that we decided to make Canterbury or Fordwich our starting point. We reached the former, a fine old

type of city, on a Saturday afternoon, and on going through the town we were impressed by the surroundings. Everything of an old-world character appeals to the tourist, so we made the most of the little time at our disposal in looking round and taking everything in.

The cathedral is, of course, the great attraction, an imposing edifice being one of the most ancient in England, and fuller, perhaps, of historical association than any other in the country. There are examples, too, of many different types of architecture to be found—these all proving of interest even to the uninitiated. Some of the stones in the crypt go back to the year A.D. 500. Although late in entering the building, we were fortunate to come across the chief verger, who turned out to be of a most obliging disposition, and he put himself particularly about, although after official hours, to go over the principal sights with us.

On making enquiry casually we found the good folks of the town knew all about the place, but as to the waterway—the object of our excursion—they had a very vague idea concerning its existence. After some difficulty, we found our way to the water by going down a side street, and here we found a boat-letter, who owned a miscellaneous collection of some dozen craft, one of which we procured.

The Stour at this point presents no particular attractions, and is, moreover, rather narrow, but it has comparatively clear water, with a considerable current and with depth enough to float small craft. It

winds about the town in a more or less circuitous manner. All the way along the course one passes old-world buildings on either side; in some cases the houses are in bridge form over the water, giving it a typical Venetian aspect. All this tends to picturesqueness, particularly where the river passes under an arch where there are the remains of an old monastery. This latter attracts the visitor, and many an artist has depicted the scene. After a time we found our progress barred by a mill; we could not continue our way as we had anticipated, so retraced our course. After landing, we directed our steps to Fordwich by Sturry, some 2½ miles on by road, calling at the Bell Hotel en route for information, when we were told that Queen Victoria once stayed the night at this old hostelry, in the early days of her reign.

At dusk we reached Fordwich, where we had procured all the room available at the quaint little inn, the Fordwich Arms, where the landlord did all he could to make us comfortable. Fordwich in bygone days, described as the Port of Canterbury, is a place of great antiquity, but with now only some 150 inhabitants. However, it can boast of a town hall some 800 years old, reported to be the oldest in England. The church also is of considerable age, and said to be the second oldest church in the country. There is a ducking-stool, now preserved in the town hall, which was much used in ancient days for refractory women, and is viewed with awe by the fair sex of the present generation.

Under exceptionally fine conditions, after a more or

less unbroken spell of bad weather, we now proceed to the object of our journey — to explore the Great Stour from this, its navigable source. For various reasons, we did not bring a motor boat, but we were pleased to see this mode of propulsion had made its appearance, as we found a small motor boat here—the only one we could trace on the Stour, although there were others, we were told. There were, however, two or three steam launches in commission.

We had chartered a skiff from the hotel-keeper, but, as it fortunately happened, the owner of a little steam launch, who keeps his craft here, was going down stream some 14 miles, and he kindly invited our party to come aboard, which invitation we gladly availed ourselves of, the skiff being towed astern. The river is fairly wide and has a good volume of tidal water, but it never assumes a breadth worth mentioning till Sandwich is reached. The effect of the tide is felt for some 15 miles up stream, and it is reckoned to give about nine hours ebb and three hours flood. The condition of the river is good, and the Commissioners do their best to keep the route as clear as possible by cutting down the weeds.

We proceeded on our journey down stream, and with the country looking its best, one could not have done the trip under more favourable conditions. There were glimpses of pretty scenery here and there showing up in the perspective worthy of note, but, at the same time, it is lost to a great extent, as the banks rise some 10ft. or 15ft. above the water level, rather obscuring the views. Still, we enjoyed all that was

DUCKING-STOOL FOR REFRACTORY WOMEN,
At Fordwich, on the Great Stour.

THE STOUR AT FORDWICH (KENT).

to be seen. On our way we passed a lavender farm, the crop on which was just on the point of being harvested, and we learned that this was a flourishing industry at one time, but had declined very much in recent years.

We passed such places or landmarks as Grove Ferry, five miles down from our start, where there is a much-frequented hotel on the riverside. Then we came to Sarre, whence a cutting or channel runs down to the sea to the well-known Reculvers on the coast of Kent, but this is totally in disuse now. A little lower down the Little Stour joins the main river, but, from all accounts, is not navigable. We then passed under a railway bridge, and here found moored three large sailing barges, laden with stone, blocking up the fairway, leaving little or no room for us to pass by. We, however, made an attempt, but unsuccessfully, as the heavy mooring rope of one of the craft got jammed underneath the launch's rudder. This delayed us about twenty minutes, and, although we had every assistance from the bargemen, they had eventually to cut the hawser (some inches in diameter), thereby releasing us, and away we started again.

Stonar Cut, 14 miles from the start, was our stopping place and the termination of the journey by launch. Here we changed over to our skiff, leaving our friends on "Irene"—that being her name—with many thanks for bringing us so far. As a matter of fact, had we not had this assistance, we would not have been able to undertake, in the time, the through journey we mapped out. At this point (Stonar) the

river takes a peculiarly circuitous course, in so far as the boat could have been carried over a neck of land with a portage of some 300 yards, and thereby saving a distance of about 5½ miles, but we were desirous of navigating the whole round. The Cut, so called, was at one time used for vessels passing through, but it is only utilized for sluice purposes now.

Proceeding under our own power, viz., by towage, in this instance, close by the bank, so as to overcome the strong tide, we reached the ruins of Richborough, an old Roman fortress, and under the shadow of the castle we partook of our luncheon. The ruins of the castle and fortifications are of the greatest antiquity, and it is strange to think that in the early times the sea came right up to this now inland place. One can hardly comprehend this, but historical tradition has it so. The Roman wall, still standing, is about 24ft. high, and is of considerable interest to antiquaries.

A little farther on we came to Sandwich, one of the Cinque Ports, for in the 11th century it was one of the most important harbours of the south coast line, though one's imagination has to travel a long way back to appreciate this fact. At the bridge we landed to inspect this old town, so redolent with historical associations. There is a considerable amount of trading done there now with fairly large barges. We saw about half-a-dozen of these moored in the roads or tidal way. After "looping the loop," as we might describe our circular tour round, we came back to Stonar Cut bottom entrance, and here we landed at

the Red Lion for tea. At this point a powerful steam tug, owned by the river authorities, is moored at a jetty for the towing of craft to and from Sandwich and other destinations.

Apart from our luck in the weather, we had the good fortune to fit in exactly with the tidal arrangements so as to get the full benefit of the ebb. Starting from here, we sculled down past some uninteresting banks of sand, which are exposed at low water, and, following the course of the Stour, marked off with a row of perches, we reached the open sea.

In such a frail craft as we had, it is only on rare occasions that this latter part of the journey can be undertaken. It is hazardous, as the conditions are only favourable once in a way. Even on the day following our experience, with a slight breeze which had then sprung up, we could not have done it. However, everything being favourable, we satisfactorily accomplished the journey. Our original intention was to make for Pegwell Bay, but with the tide running out it could not be negotiated. While nearing the end of the staked-out course, we ventured to strike out a short cut, but we had not got very far when we found ourselves aground. This was much to our surprise, as there was no indication whatever of any shallow or sandbank; in fact, nothing but the broad expanse of water as far as the eye could reach. After considerable difficulty, as the tide was ebbing, we got the boat afloat again, and retraced our route to the main channel, going again right out to sea to the outward beacon. Thereafter we took a direct course for

Ramsgate Harbour. The moral of all this is to keep the course as mapped out, in unknown waters.

Several of the boatmen at Ramsgate had never heard, in their recollection, of boats coming all the way from Fordwich to Ramsgate, so we considered we had modestly accomplished something not, at least, done every day. Thus we completed our somewhat adventurous voyage safe and sound, having had a delightful trip. Ramsgate was full of trippers, and after arranging to send our craft back by rail to Fordwich, we made for the South-Eastern Railway station, whence we travelled to Dover.

On the following and last day, we discovered a friend at the hotel, who possessed a motor, and we availed ourselves of his kindness to do by the "overland route" that portion of Kent which we had chiefly come through by water. We motored in all some 45 miles, lunching at Margate, passing through Deal and Sandwich en route, thence retracing our way back to Dover, where we caught the steamer back to town.

The distance covered in all by water was about 25 miles, with no locks on the route.

BIDFORD BRIDGE,
On the River Avon.

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THE RIVER AVON AT TEWKESBURY.

PLATE XVII.

[CRUISE XIV.
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## XIV

## FROM STRATFORD-ON-AVON TO WORCESTER ON THE RIVERS AVON AND SEVERN through the Counties of Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire.

WHERE shall we spend our Whitsun?

Such was the prominent heading on a poster which caught my eye; and this, rather than the weather, reminded me that another holiday was near at hand.

After much cogitation it was decided by the crew that, for this time of the year, the Warwickshire or Upper Avon should be the scene of their next exploration.

We travelled down comfortably on the G.W. Railway by "diner" to Stratford-on-Avon (Warwickshire), changing at Leamington into a motor train, or auto-car, consisting of one coach only, for the remainder of the journey. We duly reached the starting point for our cruise, putting up at the Swan's Nest Hotel, adjacent to the river and bridge.

One object in choosing this particular outing was to embrace the opportunity of carrying out a long-desired wish to visit Stratford-on-Avon, with its renowned Shakespearean associations.

Chartering a "chaise" next morning, we made an early start and visited Ann Hathaway's Cottage, about 1½ miles outside the town.

The place is interesting indeed with all its quaintness, and a pretty picture it makes. Driving back to town, we next went to Henley Street, to the poet's birthplace, and here we went religiously over relics and records, likewise the library and museum. The attendants gave us all the information at their command, and we felt ourselves, after our short sojourn, so carried away by everything that we became at once devotees of the subject; in fact, had we stayed much longer there would have been nothing in our "noddles," asleep or awake, except the immortal Shakespeare.

We then visited the poet's tomb, saw the register of his birth and death, and then proceeded to the Sheldonian Theatre, a fine building, said to have cost some £13,000, where there is a fine collection of paintings.

All this gave the "aquatic" tourists great gratification, and they came to the conclusion that Stratford was one of the nicest towns yet visited on our travels.

Hero and heroine worship is strong here, and Marie Corelli, whose house is in the town, is even mentioned in the same breath with the great poet by the enthusiastic tourists!

As before mentioned, this sight-seeing was part of our programme, and although the foregoing facts are, of course, known to many, still it shows what can be combined when undertaking such a trip.

And now for the waterway part of the journey.

The River Avon rises in Northamptonshire, and is navigable under certain conditions from above Warwick to Tewkesbury, where it joins the River Severn, but the permissible route only extends from Stratford-on-Avon for the through journey down, and that only for a skiff at best.

We procured such a boat from Mr. C. Bathurst, Tewkesbury, who railed the boat on to here (Stratford), where we found her in the water, all ready for the " voyageurs."

After an early lunch we made a start on our way down stream, the crew consisting of " Three Scots aboard." An energetic and assiduous lot they were, so much so that when the rotation of sculling came round, say every three-quarters of an hour or so, one was rebuffed with the remark, " Don't speak to the man at the wheel," which made it appear that it was a privilege to assist in propelling the boat!

Some two days previous to our arrival the water had been so abnormally high that acres of meadows were flooded, and it would then have been impossible for us to start at all, as the source of the channel could not be traced; besides, we could not have got underneath the arches of some of the bridges.

When we arrived, however, it had gone down considerably and in a very surprising manner for that short period. This was aided very much by the large weirs there are at different places en route, and this was quite contrary to the reports we had received of

the state of things generally, we having been told to beware of the shallow character of the river in places.

This flow of water was very helpful to us in our progress, although it made certain parts at the weirs and disused locks rather dangerous to navigation. However, as old water-dogs, we enjoyed this experience, always keeping our little " ship " well under control. With the water thus, we could have shot a number of the weirs, but not knowing our ground sufficiently, caution was the order of the day.

The river is of considerable width in the higher levels, and widens very much in parts as one gets along. Strangely enough, as we afterwards found, it narrowed down considerably in the lower reaches to our destination.

The great drawback in the upper portion, say down to Evesham, is the portage entailed at the weirs. This is particularly troublesome at Welford and Cleeve Mills, and it meant that on our route we had *to haul* our boat over nearly every time, involving a laborious operation, including the removal of the baggage and gear on each occasion. These breaks, of course, hampered us very much, and, as far as we could learn, nothing is done in any way to assist boating by removing such obstructions.

The lower section of the river, that is to say below Evesham, is in much better condition, and the workable locks, nine in number, begin near there. These locks are in fair condition, although slow to work.

In my experience, this is the first instance where

no charge was made for lock dues, in contrast to the usual custom. It may be here mentioned that there is no towpath on any part of the River Avon.

Traffic at one time used to be conducted as high as Stratford-on-Avon with barges up to about 40 tons, and we came across Mr. Spraggs, the boatbuilder, at Evesham, who informed us that his father navigated the last barge on that part in the year 1873.

Now only occasional water transport is used to Evesham, the railway opposition being too competitive. We did not come across any trading barges on the whole route, but we learn there is a small steamer that does business about this part.

The motor boat has ample scope in these reaches, and I found many patrolling the river, the greater number being on the lower section, where there is good available water. The attractiveness and beauties of the river were quite a revelation to us. We had, of course, heard of the Avon, but never imagined there were so many pleasing spots, with such plentiful foliage.

The flooded condition of the stream showed the surroundings to the best advantage, there being no exposed banks to be seen, and the scenery was brightened by clear weather and sunshine.

Some five miles down we made our first stop at Binton Bridges, where there is an inn, The Four Alls, of local fame, which building stands alone on the boundary of Gloucestershire and Warwickshire. Here we stopped to see a famous signboard with various figures painted thereon, and which probably was

erected in the time of the early Georges or William IV. The legend on same runs thus:—

The King rules all;
The Bishop prays for all;
The Soldier fights for all;
And the Farmer pays for all.

Bidford (Warwickshire), a market-gardening town, was our next port of call, where we had tea. This was intended to be our stopping point for the night, but, getting on so well, we decided to make Evesham our halting-place, and this we reached about 9 p.m. after an enjoyable day.

We made for the Crown Hotel, to find there was no room available, the town being inundated with rowing men and visitors for the regatta on Whit-Monday. The landlord put himself about, and procured sleeping accommodation for us "At Home from Home," and after supper we were glad to turn in after our long day on the water.

To give some idea of the importance of aquatics here there were over 40 entries for a one-day's programme at the local regatta, and there were competing crews from such places as Chester, Leicester, Birmingham, etc. The whole town gives itself up to this event of the year, and, compared to Henley, it shows a monster programme.

Evesham (Worcestershire) is a market town of some importance, and, like other places in this part of the country, is dependent upon agriculture and fruit culture. It has a fine bridge crossing the Avon and a prominent Norman tower, which shows to great

advantage and is visible from a considerable distance.

Our run for the day was 18 miles.

Camping out and bungalow life is much indulged in down this way, and we came across many young folks so enjoying themselves.

Close to Evesham we had rather a curious experience coming up to the ferry at Offenham, which is worked by a wire rope. This was awash, and tightly laid on the surface. We skidded right over the top, and had we not been going at the pace we were, the consequences might have been more serious; as it was, the rudder came right off. However, all's well that ends well.

Early in the following forenoon we left Evesham in fine, sunshiny weather, and, with the full state of water already referred to, we decided to finish the Avon the same day, some 26 miles down.

The river at this part assumes a tortuous character, and the distance from start to finish is just about double that as the crow flies. There is a fine, long wooded range of hills, with a conspicuous beacon on the summit, known as the Bredon Hill, situated at the extreme northern end of the Cotswolds. The beacon apparently, as one man puts it, haunts the traveller for miles, as does the "Clump" on Sinodoun Hill on the Upper Thames.

We broke our journey at Pershore (Worcestershire) some 12 miles down, where we lunched at the Angel Hotel. This is a fine specimen of an English town, and is well and cleanly kept.

The scenery all along is interesting, and reaches its

height as we approach Nafford Lock, some 10 miles from Tewkesbury.

Our visit to the Avon Valley amply repaid us, and we can confidently recommend it to any prospective tourists.

Tewkesbury, the junction of the Avon and the Severn, was our stopping place, and we reached there about 8 p.m., finishing our trip so far as the Avon was concerned.

The Bell Hotel, a well-known house, described in the novel of "John Halifax, Gentleman," was our abiding place. It is just close to the abbey, which is a particularly grand and imposing old structure, and many tourists visit the edifice. The town itself is full of interest, and has many old associations, as history can relate.

The Cheltenham College Boat Club have their headquarters here.

As before mentioned, this was to have been our final destination, but, thanks to the continued energy of our crew and the assistance of the current, we were enabled to save a day on our programme as mapped out, so we proceeded thereafter on the Severn to Worcester, 17 miles ahead.

Starting from the meeting of the waters of the two rivers on our third and last day, in perfect rowing weather, we made our way up stream. One could hardly believe that from this point the whole character of the river could change so rapidly.

The Severn at once widens into a fine majestic river of extreme width, with commanding-looking, well-

wooded banks on each side. It struck us as being a river of some importance and quite a contrast to the Avon. The volume of water is very great, without any apparent stream; only we discovered this to be very deceptive, as although it made very pleasant sculling, our progress was under three miles an hour against the current. There is here a towing-path, which can be used to more or less advantage, but we pulled all the way to our destination.

What struck us was the absence of communication from one shore to the other, there being, apart from ferries, only some two or three railway and road bridges, in the distance travelled.

Another thing that seemed strange to us was the fewness of the towns en route; in fact, in this 17 miles stretch we only came across one, viz., Upton-on-Severn, six miles from Tewkesbury. There we landed for lunch at the Star Hotel, and had a pleasant little stay at this old-world place.

Notwithstanding this being a fine river for commercial purposes, we did not meet any barges until, near Upton, we passed a tug towing no less than seventeen canal boats. A fine sight it was, and this procession, which stretched, I should think, nearly a quarter of a mile, was bound for the "Port" of Gloucester. On the Thames, in comparison, the regulation is that six barges only are allowed in tow together at one time.

Proceeding, there is not much to note. The same broad river continues to the finish of our journey, but without that variety of scenery one experiences on the Thames.

There were few pleasure boats about. We only saw half a dozen skiffs and a few motor boats.

Approaching our journey's end, 5 miles from Worcester, we would note Pixham Ferry in passing — a floating bridge for heavy traffic. From here a good view of the Malvern Hills can be obtained, Malvern being only some five miles distant.

The absence of locks also strikes one, there being so far only two on the Severn, these being very large ones. Diglis—a double lock—we reached after a stiff pull; and now our delightful trip comes to an end, reaching the fine old town of Worcester early in the evening.

Being delayed somewhat on our journey that day, our programme to visit the Cathedral and city had to be abandoned, so we made our way to the G.W.R. station and caught a train which brought us back to town not very far off midnight.

Our holiday had been a very satisfactory one, and it opens one's eyes to the beauties and pleasures one can have on other rivers far away from the dear old Thames we appreciate so much.

The geographical interest is great, while the continual change to new scenery is refreshing, leaving memories that are never obliterated; and this is one of the particular benefits in such excursions. There is so much to look back upon afterwards, with the covering of so much ground, and with so many things of interest at the different places as one travels along.

So closes another pleasant experience, voted by some of the crew to be the best we have yet had (the

fact of being the most recent); however, one thing is certain, we all enjoyed ourselves.

The distances travelled are :—

| | Miles. | Locks (in disuse). |
|---|---|---|
| Stratford-on-Avon (Warwickshire) to Evesham (Worcestershire) ... ... ... | 17½ | |
| From Evesham to Tewkesbury (Gloucestershire) ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 25½ | 9 |
| From Tewkesbury to Worcester (Worcestershire) ... ... ... ... ... ... | 17 | 1 |
| | 60 | 10 |

## XV

## FROM THE BRISTOL CHANNEL TO THE THAMES. A five days' tour of 100 miles through the Kennet and Avon Canal.

Our curiosity about the Kennet and Avon navigation was aroused by rumours of a projected service of motor boats between Bristol or Hanham (Glos) and Bath or Bradford-on-Avon (Wilts). So, after our journeyings in the Midlands, we decided to make the trip from Bristol to the Thames at Reading.

It had never been my lot to "go to Bath," as the old adage has it, under any circumstances, but, after making the journey, it struck me rather forcibly that one might do very much worse than go there viâ the Kennet and Avon Canal.

The Kennet and Avon Canal, which was built in the beginning of the 19th century, runs almost due east and west, and is 93 miles in length, with 108 locks to negotiate. It is the property of the Great Western Railway, having been taken over by that company as far back as 1852. It is practically divided

NEAR BRADFORD-ON AVON,
On the Kennet and Avon Canal. [CRUISE XV.
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THE TWENTY-NINE LOCKS NEAR DEVIZES,
The Kennet and Avon Canal. [CRUISE XV.
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PLATE XVII'.

into three sections, in so far that the River Avon runs to Bath (Somerset), then the canal proper commences there and runs to Newbury (Berks), the River Kennet taking up the remaining section of the course to Reading (Berks), the terminus.

Like several canals we have traversed it has not moved with the times, and although it passes through many populous towns en route it has fallen into comparative disuse. However, on our voyage we were on pleasure bent.

As far as I could judge, the opening for a motor boat service between Bristol and Bradford-on-Avon struck me at once as being excellent. With a good draught of water, generally speaking, lovely scenery, and without too many locks, there is ample scope for a canal cruise on these waters. Apart from the scarcity of general business on the canal, it seemed to us strange that there were so few pleasure craft about with such capital opportunities for good sailing and boating. Bristol is a large commercial city, but, as the tourist remarked about Glasgow with its beautiful Clyde attractions, "It was a fine place to get away from," and so in this case it was—under motor boat conditions.

This canal was engineered by the elder John Rennie, and, together with the London Docks and Waterloo Bridge, ranks among his masterpieces. The Great Western Railway Company has maintained this stretch of the navigation in excellent repair.

To travel by motor boat was our first intention, but

it was found impracticable at the time of year with the water she draws and some shallows on the reaches at the summit; also taking the state of the weeds into consideration, we deemed it inadvisable to make the attempt, so we had reluctantly—for the time being—to abandon the idea of the launch. Consequently we had to bring our skiff (26ft.) into requisition, and had it conveyed from Henley-on-Thames. It was found too long for one truck, so it had to be railed on a double passenger train waggon. We were glad, on arrival at Bristol, to find our boat safely transported to the Bristol Navigation Canal, quite close to the G.W.R. station, and so there our voyage began.

Our party consisted of four, including the ship's surgeon and the handy man, the latter being the purveyor. We were all willing workers, so much so that one vied with the other as to who was to scull first. With such a full crew, a trip of this nature becomes much more pleasurable. In addition to our sculling, we were fortunate to get at times a fresh westerly breeze, which we took advantage of for a part of the way, doing a delightful piece of sailing.

After a few miles of somewhat unsavoury navigation on the canal from Bristol Docks, we arrived at the River Avon, whence one gets a tidal way to Hanham, where the locks begin. The tide we found against us, and that made a stiff pull. The scenery all along gradually becomes more interesting as one progresses, and continues so up to within a mile or two of Bath.

Our first day's run was to that city, some 17 miles

with 14 locks, there being a flight of seven at the finish of the journey. After a spell of fine water we approached Bath, a really fine town and health resort, as everybody knows. We saw rather an unusual craft just about this point. An enterprising barge-owner had fitted up a canal boat and furnished it throughout —with an awning on top—as a pleasure craft, the haulage being done by a horse. The intention was to run trips from, say, Bath to Bradford-on-Avon and back, some 20 miles, without any lock obstacles. The idea is a good one, as the route is through fine country, and it reminded us of the old times one reads about when passenger traffic was conducted on the canals, coaching then being so costly.

We had a pleasant stop at Bath, putting up at a homely hostelry, the Angel Hotel, in the heart of the city, where we found comfortable accommodation. The town itself is of a purely English character, and is well worth strolling through, the situation and hilly surroundings making it a particularly attractive place.

After this short stay at Bath we started early on our journey, Devizes (Wilts) being the destination according to the programme. It was a particularly interesting day : one passes through at the approach to Bradford-on-Avon, what is justly described as the loveliest canal scenery in England. With its hilly surroundings and fine foliage it makes a never-to-be-forgotten picture. This description is not only applicable to one point, but to several miles.

At this point we passed the Somerset Coal Canal

Junction, and, some distance farther, the Wilts and Berks Canal Junction, the latter leading to Abingdon, but both these water routes have now been abandoned. Next we came upon the famous flight of 29 locks, within a distance of $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles, at Devizes (Wilts). It really forms a striking and unique sight, and is alone well worth going to see. Instead of going through the locks, we took advantage of having the boat put on a trolly and drawn up the hill to the top lock by a " young " donkey of 23 summers; we all assisted our " willing brother " in his efforts. After unloading and housing the boat, we put up in the town at the Bear Hotel, a fine old country house, where we were well cared for.

On our third day Devizes (Wilts) to Hungerford (Berks) was our route. We made a start at 9.30 a.m., the crew going well and strong. The first stretch is some 15 miles, without any lock interruptions, through a fine country, although there is a certain sameness about it. Some five miles or so from the start, near Alton Priors, there is on the hillside a famous landmark—a large white horse dug out of the turf; it practically follows one for miles, showing up very distinctly as the sun shines upon it. Close to this we came across an old houseboat said to be the identical one on which William Black wrote his " Strange Adventures on a Houseboat," and it was on this canal that the cruise was finished, as described in his book.

It was Bank Holiday, but, with the exception of a few villagers, we scarcely met a soul on the canal

banks, and this seclusion, which continues all along the route, adds to the charm of the situation. As for boat traffic, to which we have already alluded, we only met some half-dozen craft all the way through, including a canoe party doing the same trip as ourselves.

To relieve the sculling for a time we towed the boat to get through a few miles of a peculiar light green-coloured weed, not unlike Irish shamrock, which floated completely over the water. It just rests on the surface like a sheet of ice, giving a very pretty effect. We found this to be entirely local, as we did not come across it again.

The Savernake is the only tunnel on the Kennet and Avon Canal, and we went through it that afternoon. It is a well-built tunnel, 502 yards in length, about 17 yards wide, with a headway of 13 yards. In going through one is never in darkness, and one sees the other end quite distinctly. There is no towing path, but we paddled through quite easily. The following rather interesting inscription appears on a tablet above the end on the eastward side :—

" The Kennet and Avon Canal Company describe this tunnel with the name of Bruce in testimony of their gratitude for the uniform and effectual support of the Right Honourable Thomas Bruce, Earl of Ailesbury, and Charles, Lord Bruce, his son, through the whole progress of the great National Work by which a direct communication by water was opened between the cities of London and Bristol. Anno Domini 1810."

We eventually encountered the locks, 23 in num-

ber, after the 15 miles referred to, and had the misfortune to find they were all empty and against us. Apart from this, they were large locks and very slow in filling, so that our progress became very much retarded, and completely upset our calculations as to times mapped out. We, however, persevered, and, getting the aid of two kindly lock-keepers, we finished our day's, or, rather, night's, work at Hungerford at 11 p.m. We put up at the Bear Hotel here, and, after being well cared for, retired to a well-earned rest. In charming weather we made a 10 o'clock start on our fourth day, after bidding adieu to two of our party who had to return to town—very reluctantly. Proceeding, we came upon some delightful bits of scenery, and quite a change for the better.

In a former article I advocated the shallow draught punt as being the best boat suitable for canal cruising. Although we were prohibited from taking our launch, owing to our draught, we encountered at this spot a motor punt travelling from the Thames, and were pleased to see that such a craft could come along so far notwithstanding the surface weeds at certain places on the route. It proved the suitability of this type of boat for such work. As far as we could learn, that was the first motor boat that had been seen on those waters. In the afternoon we landed at Newbury (Berks), and spent an hour or so looking through the fine town. It was here that another friend, "the Major," joined us, and glad we were to see him, as he was invaluable, not for hard work, but for his helpful advice. With a late re-start, at 5.30 p.m., Alder-

maston (Berks) was to be our resting place, some nine miles down, with 11 locks, for which we hied under the most perfect weather conditions. The moon afterwards came out very clear, and assisted us to see our way in the later hours of the night. As we were again rather out of our time reckoning with the many locks, we had, as on a previous occasion, to do some late work. An obliging lock-keeper came down to pilot us a part of the way, and we duly reached Aldermaston at 10.30 p.m., after a very enjoyable evening's work. Although we had wired for rooms to the Butt Inn, we found everybody abed at this primitive little place. We, however, roused up the good people, who had given up hope of our turning up, and they provided us with all they had in the house, viz., simply bread and butter (very good fare it was at that, too), and nothing else except a little liquid refreshment. We quite enjoyed ourselves, however, at this wayside inn.

On our fifth and last day we commenced the day's journey in somewhat threatening weather, which afterwards developed into a heavy rainstorm, but cleared up, and then we had a fine afternoon. Reading was our destination, with 12 miles and 12 locks, and although we had not the sunshine we were compensated by a fine breeze aft, of which we were not slow to take advantage, and as we sailed along under such pleasant conditions the sensation was ideal. The scenery all down that stage, if not imposing, is very pleasing. The Kennet is rather tortuous about here; as one keeps meandering round the bends fresh views are brought before one at every turn,

thereby making it very interesting navigation. So ended our trip on the Kennet and Avon Canal. All through our journey we had the singular misfortune, or call it a coincidence, to have, with one exception or so, every lock against us—i.e., closed. This, of course, meant a serious impediment to our progress and a loss of many hours each day. After our many experiences, we think, taking it all round, that we enjoyed this canal as much as any we had yet traversed, passing, as we did, through fine country, where we got many grand views. The lock-keepers on this canal we found to be a particularly good class of men, extremely obliging, and willing to assist under any circumstances, whether early or late—as we sometimes were. One thing that struck us was the fact of their long term of service, as we were told that nearly all the men had been on the same duty from 20 to 40 years—truly a remarkable record. To the officials of the G.W.R., both at London and Bath, we have to tender our best thanks for their kindness and courtesy: they did everything possible to facilitate our progress, even to the extent of advising men to be ready at the locks and drawbridges.

The journey to Reading took us five days in all, with continual progression from morning to night, but if time is no object a week or more could be satisfactorily passed on this interesting waterway, so that, with fine weather and genial company, a more enjoyable vacation could not be spent.

For the benefit of those who might wish to undertake such a trip, the following particulars about the

hotels we stayed at and the distances covered may be found useful :—

Hotels we stayed at :—

Grand Hotel, Bristol (Glos).
Angel Hotel, Bath (Somerset).
Bear Hotel, Devizes (Wilts).
Bear Hotel, Hungerford (Berks).
Butt Inn, Aldermaston (Berks).

Counties passed through :—Gloucester, Somerset, Wilts, Berks. The following table shows at a glance how each day was occupied :—

| Day. | Miles. | Locks. | Tunnels. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Bristol to Bath ... ... ... ... ... | 17 | 14 | 0 |
| 2. Bath to Devizes ... ... ... ... ... | 20½ | 37 | 0 |
| 3. Devizes to Hungerford ... ... ... | 26 | 24 | 1 |
| 4. Hungerford to Aldermaston ... ... | 17½ | 21 | 0 |
| 5. Aldermaston to Reading-on-Thames | 12 | 12 | 0 |
| | 93 | 107 | 1 |

## XVI

## ON THE GREAT OUSE FROM BEDFORD TO THE WASH. 90 miles through the counties of Bedford, Huntingdon, Cambridge and Norfolk.

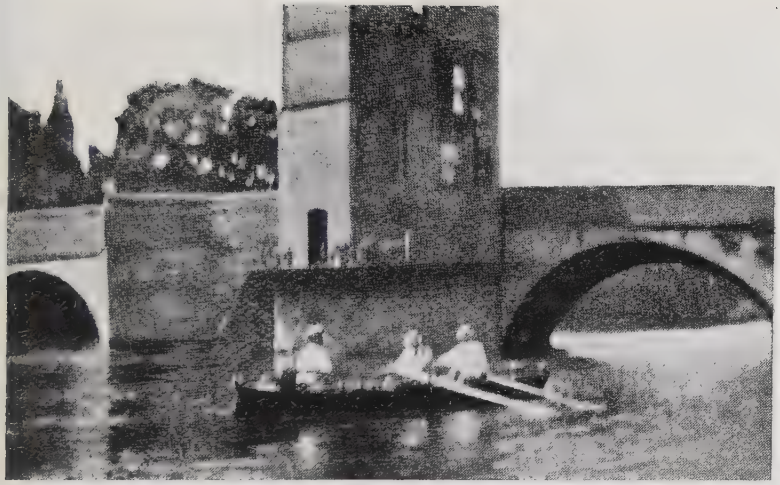
After our many wanderings in the Midland and Southern waterways we decided to explore the Great Ouse for our next holiday.

Starting from London overnight by express, we railed to Bedford — 50 miles off — within the hour, and hied to the Swan Hotel for the night.

Before proceeding on our cruise on the following morning, we looked through this fine old town, full of historical associations, and near here, as everybody knows, is the birthplace of John Bunyan, of "Pilgrim's Progress" fame. His statue appears in the town, likewise that of John Howard, the philanthropist and reformer.

There are several rivers in England of this name, but the Ouse we are about to traverse rejoices in the title of the "Great Ouse," altogether some 150 miles long—although the used and navigable portion of our journey is about 90 miles.

It has been canalized in several places at different times along the route, and the management of the waterway is under several jurisdictions.



ON THE GREAT OUSE,
Passing through St. Ives Bridge.

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ON THE RIVER CAM,
At Clayhithe.

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PLATE XIX.

There has in bygone times been considerable traffic on this river, even up to Bedford itself, but, as it was found to be unremunerative, it has fallen away and the locks have been in disuse for some time past.

However, after some agitation in the upper towns, nine of the locks from Bedford have been re-opened for the summer for pleasure-boating, and these are worked chiefly by the millers en route.

As the motor boat under present conditions could not be used for the through journey, we chartered a roomy double-sculling skiff for the run from Messrs. Cheetham and Biffen, of Bedford. Boating, we may say, is carried on here more than is usually the case in inland waters that we have visited.

In fine weather we commenced our voyage at 10.30 a.m., with 25 miles and 12 locks ahead to Huntingdon.

The upper portion of the river is attractive, and is easily navigated, but some miles down the weed trouble begins, and very serious it is, too, in some places; so much so, that we lost trace of our course on more than one occasion. This state of affairs continues down to Tempsford (Beds), some 10 miles distant, and, in addition thereto, shallows are encountered.

Eventually we managed to overcome all these difficulties, which so far had hampered our progress, and after this, to our surprise, the river suddenly became much wider, and this continues more or less from here.

The locks already referred to were easily managed, and found to be in good working order, but after St.

Neots (Hunts) the inconvenience with those that were closed began, as we had to haul the boat overland a considerable distance. Ours being a heavy skiff, the undertaking was by no means an easy one, and had we not had a full crew and outside assistance in some cases, it would have been difficult work indeed. There has been no attempt whatever made to give facilities under the circumstances, which we think might easily be done without much outlay; such facilities would encourage boating generally.

We were fortunate to come across a boating party of Cambridge "wetbobs" with two ladies, travelling down stream like ourselves, and they had taken the precaution to adopt what we thought was a very good idea, viz., to carry three wooden rollers, each about a yard long, over which to pass the skiff, and these they kindly lent to us at each lock, which helped us considerably.

The delays en route had made us so late that we had to put in two hours' work after sundown, but, fortunately, the moon being full, and the night otherwise fine, we afterwards reached Huntingdon—our destination—as the clock on the town church struck ten. The day was one full of adventure and experience, and as to the scenery, although not striking, it is very pleasant at such places as Roxton and about St. Neots. The George Hotel was our resting place, and glad we were to turn in after an arduous day's work.

Huntingdon is the birthplace of Oliver Cromwell, and in several parts of the town we found statues to commemorate his fame.

In coming down this river, we were struck by the number of campers dwelling under canvas on the bank sides, this form of amusement being much more popular in these parts than we have seen elsewhere.

As before mentioned, from the reports we had received, we did not think of bringing our motor launch, but the motor boat, we found, had already appeared on these waters, both at Bedford and at St. Neots, although only in a few instances; however, the advent was duly noted.

The difficulty in the development of the pastime generally in the upper reaches, is that notwithstanding the fact that there are runs of good water, they do not continue sufficiently for any distance. This is partially accounted for by the withdrawal of the barge traffic, which kept the course clear.

The considerable width at some places was quite a surprise to us, especially after what we had come through in the higher reaches.

At St. Neots, by the way, apart from there being sailing and boating, there was quite a small colony of little houseboats moored near to the bridge.

Again in perfect weather we made a 9.30 start from Huntingdon on our second day down stream, bound for Ely (Cams), and with the wind right aft we at once took advantage of it and hoisted our sail, which was a pleasant experience for many miles down.

The country below Huntingdon right down to St. Ives is very pretty indeed, and as interesting as any that we have come across. We had four locks in all on our day's run, over two of which we had to lift our

boat—again a tedious operation. It seemed to us a pity that the locks should be closed for years through some misunderstanding between the parties concerned. All that is wanted is a key to open these well-constructed locks, but no!—there they are: closed to everybody! Of course, the inconvenience to us, as travellers, was only temporary, but to others whom it affects more seriously it has led to discontent and a chronic grumbling.

Another result is that the commercial traffic has flown, possibly never likely to return. But what is worse, by being so closed, the weed obstruction has increased tenfold.

After sailing some 13 miles to Earith, we come to the junction of the West or natural River Ouse, which diverts our course off the main channel from the Hundred Foot River. This latter consists of two deep cuttings between high mud banks through 20 miles of country to Denver Sluice, and is the beginning of the tidal way. The cuttings are also known as the New and Old Bedford Rivers, and were constructed to shorten the route to King's Lynn by about 11 miles early in the 17th century, by soldiers and sailors taken as prisoners of war, so history relates.

The river from St. Ives we found in a very weedy state. The bridges on this river are of rather a unique and striking character, particularly at St. Neots, Huntingdon, and St. Ives. They have quite a style of their own, which arrests the attention of the passer-by.

The bridge of St. Ives has a tower built on one of

the parapets, and is sufficiently large to form a dwelling house of some storeys, and at the present time is occupied as a residence. This struck us as being something after the type of Old London Bridge in bygone days.

The town of St. Ives is an interesting, old-world place, and this we should mention is the highest point up to which barges can now be navigated. Although we were not impressed, up to this point, by the commercial aspect of the Ouse, we were informed by a local authority that there was a likely development of traffics anticipated down stream in the future.

Here at Earith Junction we land for lunch, which we partake of in picnic fashion on the banks, resuming out journey on the Old River, which is 15 miles to Ely without a lock, but so narrow is it that we had to have recourse to our towing rope. This mode and change of progression through the Fen country we quite enjoyed, doing some nine miles in this way and sculling the remainder, when the widening river permitted it.

Coming along this particular stretch, we hardly met a soul en route, and this again may be said to be the case, generally speaking, on most rivers and canals when once away from the centres of population. This, perhaps, to many people rather enhances the charm of a holiday after months of rush and hustle in town.

Eleven miles down from Earith, we came to Pope's Corner, where the River Cam (which leads to Cambridge, some 16 miles up stream) joins the Ouse. Four

miles farther we reached Ely, our stopping place for the night, at 10 p.m., the moon again assisting us to pilot our way pleasantly along.

After some difficulty in finding accommodation, on account of the town being very full of visitors, we were housed, and made welcome at the Bell Hotel.

The cathedral here is a beautiful structure, and its elevation such that it forms a prominent landmark for many miles around.

I had a conversation with a prominent boat owner here, from whom I learned that there has been more development with the motor boat at Ely than on any part of the River Ouse, and he thinks it is likely to increase. There is, I think, every likelihood of this, as the stretches of water are of the very best, giving in some places about 10 feet depth of water.

It is interesting to note that just a mile below Ely there is a long cutting of five miles, and here it is that the Cambridge University crews have their early training, and the trial eights are rowed.

After a pleasant, although hurried, stay at Ely, we made an early start on this our third and last day, the continued good weather leaving nothing to be desired.

The distance to be traversed to accomplish the finish of our journey was 30 miles, with one tidal lock at Denver Sluice, where we had to catch the ebb tide—hence our early departure. This we just managed to do after a hard piece of sculling, and we reached the lock, 17 miles down, in time to get the remaining ebb, which just carried us down within a mile of home, when a strong flood tide was encountered, and we

reached our destination—King's Lynn—at 5.15 p.m.; not a bad day's work, we thought, having covered the 30½ miles, including stoppages, in 8½ hours.

Some few miles down, near Littleport, the Little Ouse branches off to Thetford, a distance of 23 miles. From Earith Bridge Lock to Denver Sluice is 45 miles, and this, I think, is one of the longest uninterrupted stretches of water without locks. This shows the flat nature of the country thereabouts, as, in fact, it has been in all the counties we have come through on this cruise.

The depth of water in the lower reaches and width of river came as a surprise to us. It is entirely free from weeds, and what more ideal place could one get for the motor launch? The scenery all down this river varies very much. It never reaches the grandeur one experiences on the Thames, but it is very pleasant indeed, and is well worthy of a visit.

As to the surroundings below Denver—where we again join the Hundred Foot River—it is simply a tidal way with deep, uninteresting high banks, and these show the great extent of the rise and fall of the tide.

On the way down the tidal way is another long cutting known as the Eau Brink Cut, and these give the idea that there have been at one time endeavours to make this Great Ouse a commercial river of importance.

Coming down these last 14 miles, we did not meet a single craft of any kind until we arrived at our destination.

We landed at the ferry at King's Lynn, and consigned our skiff back to Bedford by rail, and so finished up a particularly happy and interesting trip.

Our crew consisted of four good men and true, all honest workers, too, with no shirkers, and, having this full complement, it enhanced the pleasure of our voyage considerably, as there is complete relief in the sculling rotation.

Although this trip has been accomplished in three days, four or five days should really be taken over it, but we were desirous of pushing on and finishing our journey during the Bank Holiday recess. This we just managed, chiefly through there being no hitch in our plans, and through the weather being as near perfection as we could wish.

The total distance shown below is 84 miles (with 18 locks), or an average of 28 miles per day for the whole trip.

So closes still one more voyage of exploration; and when one looks back to it, it is with the feeling of utmost satisfaction.

| Table of Distances. | Miles. | Locks. |
|---|---|---|
| Bedford to Huntingdon ... ... ... | 25 | 12 |
| Huntingdon (Beds) to Ely (Cambs) | 28 | 5 |
| Ely to King's Lynn ... ... ... ... | 31 | 1 |
| | 84 | 18 |

## XVII

# FROM CAMBRIDGE TO ELY ON THE RIVER CAM.

A LONG-DEFERRED visit to Cambridge and the River Cam has at last been accomplished. This river, also known as the Granta, flows some 40 miles through Cambridgeshire to near Ely, and is navigable for a short distance above Cambridge. It is said, however, that a canoe can travel some 20 miles higher up stream. Grantchester being the starting point selected, we chartered a boat which took us up as far as that place some three miles above Cambridge, at which part the Cam is a moderate-sized river, with pleasant rural surroundings.

As everybody knows, the Cam is identified with the 'Varsity crew, who do part of their training here, and the colleges have bumping races on these upper reaches. The colleges also have their boathouses along the river banks, and are all of interest to the boating man.

In fine weather next morning we made our start on the Cam proper, doing that part where the college lawns slope down to the water's edge. There are a

number of bridges, and amongst them still another "Bridge of Sighs," of quite a Venetian character.

The route down stream cannot be commended for its beauty, the country all around being very flat, as is to be expected in the Fen district. Still, there are parts on the route that make a strong bid for pleasant scenic effect, and that particularly near Clayhithe, 6 miles down our course.

A little lower down we come to Upware, where we land at a primitive little inn, with the prominent sign on the gable of the house, "Five Miles from Anywhere—No Hurry," and here, in this unpretentious place, we did full justice to a good lunch after our 11 miles run down stream.

The Cam is, generally speaking, a fairly good river with plenty of water, although at certain times of the year it is sluggish and weeds are encountered here and there. The uniformity of the course was remarked upon, the width being about the same nearly all the way down.

The motor boat has come to stay here, and there were a number of them about, but chiefly of the smaller type. Besides, there were many sailing and rowing boats afloat, and the piscatorial fraternity was, as usual, well represented on the banks, so the river is fully taken advantage of.

At last we came to Pope's Corner, where the Cam joins the Great Ouse, and here the "Fish and Duck"—a hostelry—is a prominent landmark. We then espied Ely Cathedral, prominently situated on a commanding elevation on the left bank, and soon

we reached our destination (Ely) and finished what had been to us an enjoyable little week-end outing, enhanced by good weather.

| Distances Travelled. | Miles. | Locks. |
|---|---|---|
| Grantchester and Cambridge to Pope's Corner (junction of Great Ouse) ... ... ... ... ... ... | 17 | 3 |
| Pope's Corner to Ely ... ... ... | 3 | — |
| | 20 | 3 |

## XVIII

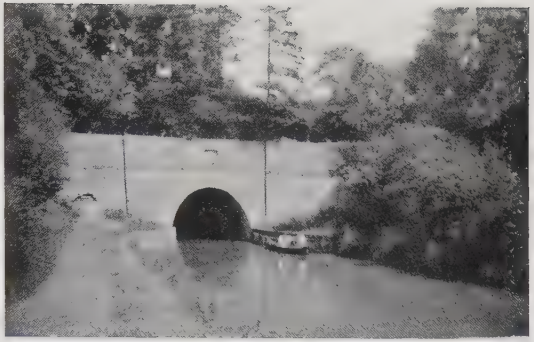
# A LAND AND WATER TRIP THROUGH LEICESTERSHIRE FROM DAVENTRY TO THE TRENT.

With the advent of summer our thoughts turned to the question as to where to spend our next holiday. At last we elected to add to our experiences "Round the Canals," this time through Leicestershire, bringing our car—a 16 h.p. Darracq—also into requisition for the combined trip by land and water.

We started our journey under favourable weather auspices from the Weald of Kent and proceeded to London, passing Sevenoaks and Bromley on the way. There was little to comment upon concerning this well beaten track further than to remark that the roads were found—as they invariably are in Kent—to be in excellent condition for motoring.

After a look round in London we left next afternoon for Daventry, a distance of some 75 miles, with a strengthened crew of five all told, including my wife and the chauffeur.

We enjoyed the drive notwithstanding the mazy run through the seemingly never-ending thoroughfares in the North of London. After many miles we at last emerged into the country, and later passed St. Albans, Dunstable, Stony Stratford, and Towcester en route, all interesting to the traveller, each town having its own characteristics. After some



A LAND AND WATER TRIP THROUGH LEICESTERSHIRE.

(1) and (4) Bridges en route, Grand Junction Canal; (2) Foxton Locks (ditto);
(3) Daventry, our Starting-Point.

[CRUISE XVIII.

PLATE XX.

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trouble on the road with petrol locks and a leak in our tanks, which was put right by the kindly aid of a local " medical " at a wayside village, we eventually reached Daventry under somewhat trying weather conditions, as it turned out to be the hottest day on record in those parts for some years back.

In some of our former trips we had experienced great heat, and, having a touring car, we put up the Cape hood to protect us, but this rather aggravated the warmth than otherwise. We then experimented by putting down the glass screen and rolling up the back part of the hood about a foot or so. This gave relief at once, and caused a cooling current of air to pass through the car, which added to our comfort.

Next morning, travelling through delightful country, we reached the Grand Junction Canal five miles from Daventry, and leaving the car at this point walked to Norton Junction, Long Buckby, where the waterway branches off to the Leicester Canal system. This latter canal at one time was known as the Grand Union, but is now owned and controlled by the Grand Junction Canal Co.

We continued along and soon reached Watford locks, a flight or staircase of seven locks, of a narrower type, by the way, than on the main Grand Junction. Here, at the top lock, we found our craft, a good, roomy double-sculling skiff, awaiting us, the boat having been conveyed by road from Northampton, some 12 miles off. Strangely enough this, by the way, was the same craft that we had during a previous tour on the River Nene, from Northampton to the

Wash, railing it to Boston and proceeding by water to the River Trent via Lincoln and the Fossdyke Canal.

We were therefore quite at home with the little "ship" that was to carry us on the voyage, which, we might say, was fully equipped with sculls, paddles, mast and sail, and a lengthy tow-rope, so we cared not how we got along.

The motor meantime was sent ahead to North Kilworth, 16 miles on the route, and our chauffeur, also an efficient waterman, walked some miles back to meet us on the towpath to lend his assistance in getting along. This he did daily on the journey.

After progressing some two miles from Watford we came to Crick tunnel, three-quarters of a mile in length—a well constructed and roomy tunnel. The experience of going through was novel. The coolness was delightful, after the scorching weather in the open. With the aid of the paddles and a useful electric torch to lighten our way we managed to navigate our way through, taking about half an hour for the distance. Midway in the tunnel we encountered a canal barge, the man poling his way along, which, he told us, would take him an hour in all to accomplish. There was ample room for us also in the tunnel; in fact two barges could easily pass each other.

The country all along is of a pleasing character, with well-wooded surroundings. The passenger, too, by water gets glimpses of scenery which can be seen nowhere else, and the progress being slow he has the advantage of appreciating it to the full, and

that in the perfect solitude and stillness which is the charm of canal life.

North Kilworth was reached about 9 p.m., and soon we were bowling along in the car to Rugby—about 12 miles ahead—the nearest convenient stopping place. Here we put up at the Grand Hotel and sat down to a belated meal. We started in the car next morning to rejoin our craft at Kilworth, after being delayed a little with some lamp repairs, and motored through fine, luxuriant country. We saw at once from the lie of the land how adaptable Leicestershire is for sporting purposes, and we were told that the hunting packs were out every day in the week in this district.

On this day's voyage we encountered another tunnel—Husbands Bosworth—1,200 yards long, which we paddled through in 20 minutes time. This is close to a village of the same name, and standing rather prominently on the hillside is a fine old church, the spire of which is a landmark for miles around.

We had travelled on many canals in our time, but up to now never seemed to have been so much out of the track of civilization, and had we not had the car with us, there would have been great difficulty in getting housing accommodation. However the motor has overcome all that, as we had to travel more than 10 miles at times to procure a bed.

We had picnic luncheons on the canal sides, each day we brought the necessary viands and utensils in our hampers; in fact there was no alternative method of procuring our provender.

The last two days we had no lock work, as there was an unusually long stretch of 22 miles from Watford top lock to Foxton locks, which place we reached late on a fine afternoon. There is a magnificent view of very wide range from the lock-keeper's house on the top of the hill.

At this rather interesting part of the canal is the junction to Market Harborough, 5 miles distance by water. Pleasure-seekers come here in large numbers, and boating parties make it a holiday resort. Up to this point there had been quite an absence of the boating fraternity, but the piscator was very much in evidence. The fishing rights are restricted in so far that a charge is made to the public for the use of the private water.

As we passed, a pegged-down competition was going on, and there seemed about 50 enthusiasts in what appeared a very limited space, all trying their luck, but we personally saw no fish drawn from those dusky waters.

Foxton is rather a well-known landmark with its flight of 10 locks, as it is here that a fine modern inclined plane barge lift was constructed to convey the barges bodily by placing them in tanks, where they were hoisted or lowered as required—an excellent idea although a costly one. As it was not then in use we did not see the apparatus in operation. This arrangement, it must be understood, is to avoid the use of the locks in question and so save considerable time with the 75 feet drop that there is on the brow of the hill. We had our skiff taken down the locks or

staircase for us, which took about 45 minutes, and while this was being done we regaled ourselves with tea on the summit, at the same time appreciating the fine view already referred to.

Again passing through more delightful wooded scenery we reached Kilworth, with a series of five locks to negotiate. After an enjoyable bit of sculling we arrived late in the evening at the small hamlet of Newton Harcourt, our destination, after covering a distance of 18 miles for the day's run. Market Harborough, 10 miles off, was our sleeping place, and we reached there after 10 o'clock p.m. This is an important market town of some 8,000 inhabitants, and a great hunting centre.

We put up at the Three Swans Hotel, a hostelry of some historic interest, with a record of about 300 years to its credit. A handsome signboard in fine wrought-iron work is to be seen here, and is reputed to be one of the oldest in the country. It is reported that Charles I made this house his headquarters before proceeding to the Battle of Naseby.

We next day proceeded on our journey back to Newton Harcourt, thoroughly enjoying the motor run on a nice fresh morning. We were soon under way bound for Thurmaston, some 16 miles ahead, and our stopping place.

The scenery is picturesque till Leicester is approached, when it loses its rural appearance; this in fact applies to all other canals when they pass through populous towns.

For over a mile of our route we seemed to cause

considerable curiosity and amusement to the many onlookers who were out for their evening stroll. Many were the epithets—complimentary and otherwise—hurled at us as we passed along, which rather tickled our risible faculties. Here, at Leicester, the Grand Junction Canal comes to an end, and a good navigable waterway we found it, particularly the latter part of the way, where the water becomes purer and the weeds less. Barge traffic is not heavy, but with such a waterway right to the Midlands from the London Docks it struck us that there is no reason why a larger volume of traffic should not be carried with such a fine canal as a medium of through communication.

We now entered the Leicester Navigation, a continuation of the route which extends 16 miles with 11 locks to Loughborough. Five miles from Leicester on this course we reached Thurmaston Lock, where we left the boat for the night, motored back to Leicester, and there put up at the Bull Hotel.

Before motoring next morning to Thurmaston we took a meander round Leicester, the county town, and were, we may say, rather impressed with this busy place, the canal itself giving considerable facilities to the local industries. Eventually we got afloat and sent the motor-car on to Trent Lock, the finish of our water journey, some 20 miles ahead. After the commercial aspect referred to we soon again reached delightful open country, which we enjoyed all the more after our town experience.

Loughborough, as before mentioned, is the termi-

nus of the Leicester Navigation; after that we entered the Loughborough Navigation—which is really the River Soar canalized. It has seven locks on the course, and is nine miles in length up to the junction of the River Trent.

As we progressed on this, our latter stage, we were agreeably surprised by the charming scenery, enhanced as it was by the sunset effects on the water at the close of the day. We should say that in these two last navigations our crew had to work the locks themselves—or nearly so—a somewhat laborious and slow operation.

There were lock-keepers somewhere about, but hay-making being in full swing their services were more profitably employed. At last, at about 10 o'clock, we reached our final destination by water, viz., the Trent where the Soar and that river join, but although so late we had the aid of the moon at its fullest, and that helped us very much in getting along.

We left the boat, made our arrangements to have it railed back to Northampton, and so ended that part of the excursion.

We now returned by car, which our man had brought through numerous field tracks to meet us, and reached Loughborough, the King's Head Hotel, after a nine-mile drive, as the town clock struck eleven. We rather disturbed the hotel-keepers by our late arrival, but they generally welcomed us all the same. Loughborough is also a busy place, with its bell-casting foundry and large electric works. There are, we should add, innumerable bridges along the

whole route, and likewise a towpath, which changes, by the way, from side to side of the canal every few miles.

A more enjoyable holiday could not be spent. The mode of progression was of such a varied character, embracing motoring, sculling on the waterway, also towing the boat and sailing when there were favourable breezes, all giving welcome changes and relief to the crew in each day's programme.

We enjoyed our journey back from Loughborough, although it was a hot one, but with hood curtain up and glass screen down we made the best of such a trying temperature in our 140-mile run from Loughborough to London in the day. Our route was through Leicester, Napton-on-the-Hill (Warwickshire), Banbury, and Oxford. We ascended the hill at Napton, and from the summit near the church and windmill viewed with great pleasure the lovely scene therefrom on such a clear day as it was. Eight counties are said to be visible from this particular point.

The waterways we travelled on were the Grand Junction Canal (Leicester section), the Leicester Navigation, and the Loughborough Navigation, and the counties we motored through in our seven days' trip were nine in number, viz., Kent, Middlesex, Herts, Bucks, Northants, Warwick, Leicester, Notts, and Oxon. The distances covered were 490 miles by road and 70 miles by water.

HEREFORD,
On the Wye.

[CRUISE XIX.
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*(By permission of the G.W. Ry. Co.)*

SYMOND'S YAT,
On the Wye.

[CRUISE XIX.
*Page* 125.

PLATE XXI.

## XIX

## A HUNDRED MILES ON THE RIVER WYE through the counties of Radnor, Brecknock, Hereford and Monmouth.

After many experiences in southern waters, our next exploits were farther afield, the River Wye being decided on for a Spring cruise at Eastertime. It is a far cry from London to our starting point, and the journey to Hay (Brecknock) took us altogether about seven hours, travelling by the G.W. Railway from Paddington, *via* Gloucester and Hereford. Hay is a primitive little Welsh town of some 1,700 inhabitants, and report has it that at a certain point near here one can throw stones into the three counties of Brecknock, Radnor and Hereford.

The boat that was to do service on the journey we had sent on from Salter Bros., Oxford, and on our arrival at the station we found it awaiting us. A portage was necessary to the riverside, and with the assistance of half-a-dozen navvies we managed to launch our skiff.

With a good strong crew eager for the fray, and everything found to be shipshape, we made a start on our long looked forward trip on the Wye.

This river has deservedly a great reputation for its natural beauties, and enthusiasts claim for it first place in the United Kingdom in this respect.

The navigable part for boating purposes is nearly 100 miles in length, from Hay to Chepstow, and is of a particularly tortuous character, which makes it about two and a half times the distance as the crow flies, and it is only at certain times of the year that these higher reaches can be navigated.

Notwithstanding our expectations as to the state of the river, we found shortly after getting away that we were grounding again and again, in fact so much that two of our crew had to dispense with their foot-gear to enable us to push the boat along over the shallows. This was quite a novel experience, but had we not done so, our journey at this part would have been impossible, as during the day our "emergency men" had to be called into requisition again and again.

There is no doubt that a journey such as this is fraught with considerable danger, and there is a great element of luck in escaping damage considering the amount of keel scraping we encountered even in the recognized channels; consequently none but the strongest boats are fit to undertake such a voyage.

And so we proceeded on our cruise, enjoying the fine varying scenery, pleasing in every way, and with a style peculiarly its own. In the distance of thirty

miles of our day's work we did not pass a town and saw very few people. Our only companions were the bleating lambs on the hill-sides, and there were scores of them about. In the absence of landmarks on the route, not even bridges, there is a difficulty in knowing one's whereabouts, and so down you speed, as it were, on an endless river.

In addition to the shallows we had many weirs to shoot, and these not without danger, but the worst navigable part of the river is at Mornington Rocks or Falls. One is made aware of this by the roar like unto that of many waters as it is approached. There are two channels at this point, divided by an island; the left one courts disaster, so we chose the other, dragging the boat over a long shallow rocky bed. This we negotiated satisfactorily after considerable exertion.

Thereafter all went well until within four miles of Hereford, when, coming over a shallow, we felt a distinct bump, and shortly after water was discovered in the boat. It was a case of "all hands to the pump," and we had to start baling out, and, by doing this continuously, we managed to keep the boat afloat and safely reached Hereford, our destination, not reluctantly, however, as we had had a long and exciting day of it.

With such risks and the liability of mishaps, a pilot would be advisable, and anyone doing the journey could procure one from the boatman at Hereford Bridge. We, however, elected to do our own pilotage.

Hereford is a fine old county town and has many attractions, the old cathedral and church being the chief. Hereford Market, principally for cattle, is one of the most important in the West Country.

At this point we noted the rise and fall of the river where the winter flood mark showed traces on the trees and bushes to the extent of some 10 feet above our present level. It was interesting to learn that a local boatman—whom we came across—when a lad remembered the last barge that was navigated from Hay some half a century ago. Now commercial traffic has been abandoned generally since the Wye Valley Railway was opened in 1876.

Record has it, too, that an Act was passed for the Wye Navigation so far back as 1662, showing the ancient traditions of this waterway.

We also were informed that shipbuilding was carried on at Hereford in the early days, and there is a picture in the town of the launch of a brig 170 tons burden, built in 1823. One would not think such a thing possible, but so it was. The means adopted when navigating these ships down to the sea was to fill the holds of the ships with a sufficient quantity of water to enable them to get clear under the arches of the bridges at the opportune flood time.

We again made an early start on our second day with a journey of about 28 miles before us, Ross being our destination. The river became somewhat wider as we got along and the depth of water was more favourable; at the same time the course had to be carefully watched, as shallows and weirs still abound in

places. We, however, with the aid also of a good current, got on very well and had not the keel scraping experiences described earlier; the wind also, which had been against us on the previous day, was now in our favour and we had our first experience of sailing, which took us along under very pleasant conditions for some 15 miles down stream.

The scenery was of a grander character, but not so interesting, perhaps, as that passed on the previous day. We did not, however, see it to the same advantage as one would later in the season when the foliage would be farther advanced.

The only signs of life we saw hereabouts were some half-dozen salmon fishers plying their gentle art, chiefly in midstream, and we were fortunate to see, in passing, three salmon being played and landed, the largest being 22 lbs. in weight. The Wye has a famous reputation as a salmon river, and is consequently taken great advantage of by anglers.

Being far away from civilization our victualling was all done aboard our craft each day, and lunch and tea were important functions, and very enjoyable they were under such picnic conditions. At last we see Ross in the distance—prominent from afar with its fine situation, and here we landed. We had some difficulty in procuring rooms with the Bank Holiday tourists about, but at length we got comfortably housed at the Swan Hotel. Our stay here was a pleasant one and we "did" the town—a place of about 3,300 inhabitants—and visited the fine old church, with its stately spire, situated on the promon-

tory. Inside this church there is the unusual sight of two elm trees growing, the roots of which can be seen from outside the walls.

The "Man of Ross," John Kyrle by name and immortalized by Pope, is buried in the church. His fame was more than local as he was identified by his philanthropic actions. He died in 1724.

The view from the hill at Ross is very grand, embracing as it does that part known as the "Horse Shoe" bend of the river. Boating is indulged in here, but the motor boat has not much scope owing to the shallows; however, a small excursion steamer, built locally, with stern paddle wheels—drawing but a few inches of water—plied up and down stream for a course of some six miles.

The following morning opened with a snow storm, then a storm of wind—and it can blow in the gullies hereabouts. It worked the river up to a little sea, so much so that it necessitated our heaving to for some time as progress was impossible. Then, following that, we had bright sunshine and finished up with a rainstorm, really a good day's sample of the British climate.

The beauties of the Wye have been often described; and there is no doubt as to the striking grandeur of the scenery; as we travelled along some very fine views opened up en route, the approach to Symonds Yat being particularly imposing. There is a continuity, too, of the fine scenery for miles, in fact up to some 30 to 40 miles ahead, and the great hills, beautifully

wooded, make it a picture not easily to be forgotten, and difficult to be equalled elsewhere.

We landed and ascended to the top of the hills—where a flagstaff marks the summit, and here we had a commanding view of the surroundings showing a wide expanse of country. The town or village of Symonds Yat itself is of a quaint and straggling character on the hill-side and is not unlike a Swiss town.

Some few miles below this we reached Monmouth, an old English county town well worth landing to see, and here history tells us that Henry the Fifth was born in the year 1387.

The navigation was not quite so hazardous on the whole, although there were three weirs, at Lydford, Symonds Yat and Bigsweir, that want careful navigating, and woe betide the boatman who does not do just exactly the right thing. I might say that after actually accomplishing these risky achievements of "shooting the shoots" we breathed somewhat more freely.

Our sailing arrangements were satisfactory, as we did about two-thirds of the 28 miles under canvas, which made a delightful change after the sculling exercise.

Llandogo (Monmouth), an unpretentious little village, was our resting place for the night, and here we had arranged to stop on account of the tidal arrangements on the morrow. On this our fourth and last day, we made an early start to catch the top of the tide, and lucky we were to do so as it happened: the

navigation wants careful watching, being of a somewhat risky character. The rise and fall at the estuary is quite abnormal, and is said to be greater than anywhere else except in the Bay of Fundy, a strange but striking fact; and the highest tide recorded at Chepstow is said to have been no less than 65 feet. With all these reports in our minds we looked for a very rapid current, but to our surprise it was not so unmanageable, and we could quite well hold our own when controlling our craft down the rapid tidal way.

Three miles down from Llandogo we came to Tintern Abbey, known to tourists as one of the most picturesque in England, with its fine architectural examples dating from the 13th century, and it is well worth a visit.

The river, as it wends its way down to the sea, assumes a greater width and the heights on either side command attention.

Just approaching the completion of our journey some 10 miles down from Llandogo, Chepstow Castle came in view. It is beautifully situated on the right bank, and is a fine old fortress. Shortly after we arrived at Chepstow Bridge, our destination, where ended what had been a most successful and enjoyable trip.

Everything was in our favour—fair wind and tide—the only drawback being the coldness of the weather at times, but notwithstanding we had a lot of sunshine.

With the assistance of some half-dozen salmon fishermen, we had our boat hoisted from the low water

up the causeway some 50ft. to the roadway, whence it was conveyed to the station and railed back to Oxford; and so ended our holiday.

Distances of route :—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Hay (Brecknock) to Hereford ... ... | 30 | miles |
| Hereford to Ross (Hereford) ... ... | 27½ | miles |
| Ross to Llandogo (Monmouth) ..... | 27½ | miles |
| Llandogo to Chepstow (Monmouth) | 10 | miles |
| | 95 | miles |

## XX

## FROM GRANTHAM TO NOTTINGHAM, ON THE GRANTHAM CANAL, through the Counties of Lincs, Leicester and Notts.

August Bank Holiday saw us once more afloat, our venue this time being the Grantham Canal. We had, earlier in the year, done the Trent from Burton, and our desire was to navigate what is really an offshoot from that river. This canal is thirty-three miles long, has eighteen locks, equally divided a few miles from each end, leaving a fine long uninterrupted stretch of twenty miles on the level. Like all such waterways it is of ancient date, and the Act of Parliament of its inception goes back to 1749. The management has passed through several hands and it is now controlled by the Great Northern Railway Company.

Travelling from King's Cross to Grantham on the Saturday afternoon, we elected to start from that end of the route, and had our boat from Mr. Witty, Trent Bridge, Nottingham.

Grantham is an old-fashioned town on the River Witham, of a quiet, quaint, straggling character, with some 12,000 inhabitants. It has early historical associations, and even the Angel and Royal Hotel,

VINCENT'S BRIDGE, GRANTHAM CANAL.

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CHARMING SCENE ON THE NENE (LILFORD).

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PLATE XXII.

where we put up, boasts of ancient records. It was once the property of the Knights Templars, and is a picturesque house of the castellated type, embellished with interesting carvings of Edward III and his Queen, now partially covered with ivy. We were informed that King John held Court there in 1213, also that Richard III signed the Death Warrant of the Duke of Buckingham there in 1483. The church of St. Wulfram's stands close by and is a fine edifice, with a spire of some 280 feet, said to be the third highest in England.

At last we proceeded on our journey in fine and promising weather, our day's destination being Harby (Leicester), a distance of 15 miles, with seven locks, the first being five miles on the way. These locks are 75 feet long by 14 broad and are in good preservation, especially for a canal that is more or less in disuse. We found the water about three and a half feet deep and the course in good condition at the start for sculling. This continued for about three parts of the day's journey, when we encountered weeds—here and there—but otherwise there were no difficulties to surmount. There are numerous bridges and swing bridges on the route, about 70 or so in all. The former are fairly high brick structures, but the latter, built of wood, are so low that we just managed to get under them by careful " engineering."

The beauty of the scenery in the earlier stages came quite as a surprise to us, as we thought it might savour somewhat of the character of the Fen district, but on the contrary we encountered some very pretty

and pleasing vistas, and masses of foliage. In some instances there were long avenues of trees, and views therein being enhanced occasionally by the picturesque aspect of the bridges. The country around is rich and luxuriant, and more or less undulating, with wooded parks and hills, making altogether a fine piece of pastoral scenery.

Not the least of the pleasures of canal travelling is that one can glide through rural scenery almost beyond human ken, and the charms of nature can be fully appreciated. All this, with its stillness and restfulness, makes a pleasant and enjoyable change from the rush and bustle of city life.

Some five miles on our way we got our first glimpse of Belvoir Castle, the property of the Duke of Rutland, who holds sway in these parts. It is a fine prominent mansion of great architectural attractions, and is conspicuously situated on a hilltop. As we wended our way along the canal with its numerous windings, the Castle was kept more or less in view for miles. There was no indication of civilization until we reached Redmile, 10 miles from Grantham, and there we landed to inspect this little village. Five miles farther on we arrived at Harby, our destination, at 7 p.m.—another village of some few hundred inhabitants—after a pleasing day's experience. We put up in this quiet Leicester village at the White Hart Inn, where nothing was too good for us, and we were apparently the only visitors in the place, although it was Bank Holiday.

On this particular route accommodation is very

scanty and there are no large towns anywhere on the canal—Melton Mowbray, which is eight miles away, being the nearest, so we were fortunate in being able to procure rooms, which we did beforehand, at this "halfway house." Our landlord informed us that we were right in the centre of the famous Stilton cheese country, and strangely enough this speciality can only be produced over a limited area, there being certain agricultural advantages obtained from the nature of the soil in these parts. We had, of course, to sample the celebrated *fromage*.

Next morning we made an early start from Harby under the most perfect weather conditions and with the knowledge that we had to make the most of our time, with 18 miles to cover and 11 locks to work by ourselves. These latter, beginning seven miles from Harby, were somewhat tardy in filling, and as they were big locks our time was kept fully occupied.

The scenery, contrary to what we were led to expect, was again a pleasing surprise, especially the first part of the way, although it was of a different type to that of the previous day. In navigating canals generally the view is sometimes hemmed in by hedges, but in this instance, taken altogether, a wide range of the open country is obtained, showing fine wooded and interesting surroundings, which were seen at their best. Sometimes the route would run through a valley, which, with the luxuriant vegetation, makes quite a picture and gives the impression that it is not on a canal course one is travelling, but along a real river with natural banks.

After an enjoyable pull, a fresh wind springing up ahead and the canal getting somewhat weedy at this point, we took to towing—on what was a good tow-path—for some way ahead. This made a pleasant change in the day's work, apart from keeping up the pace to reach our destination in time.

A number of men are kept employed clearing out the canal, and we were informed that it would be better for going through in a few weeks' time, when the accumulation of weeds would be removed.

The motor boat had not at the time of our visit shown itself on this waterway, but a shallow draught craft would find good scope at certain times of the year and particularly on the fine long run where there are no locks.

With the exception of the ubiquitous piscator, who always appears wherever there is a stretch of water, there are few persons to be seen on this silent waterway, and with the exception of an occasional craft, there is little movement on the canal. At a point near Hickling we met a barge drawn by a couple of horses, having, we were told, one of the Railway Company's chiefs on board, making a tour of inspection of the waterway.

Here again very few villages are to be seen, and as for towns, they are miles away, an occasional church spire in the distance being the only indication of life. We had therefore to provide our lunches abroad, and these *al fresco* meals were much appreciated.

One very good plan is adopted on this canal, and

that is the distances are distinctly marked by iron pegs every quarter of a mile on the towpath. One's progress then is noted with interest, and the traveller is also assured as to the correctness of the measurements. On many waterways we have found, by sad experience, that the mileage tables give varying results.

On approaching our journey's end we all agreed that the Grantham was a good canal for such an excursion, with good lock facilities. For commercial purposes, however, like many other canals, it is "off the track" and does not pass through populous districts, nor are there any trade interests, except agriculture, on the route.

After an arduous day's work we eventually reached our destination, and our party unanimously came to the conclusion that it was one of the most successful little cruises we had done, the weather, an important factor in this case, contributing more than its usual share to the making of an excellent holiday.

| Distances travelled :— | Miles. | Locks. |
|---|---|---|
| Grantham (Lincs) to Harby (Leicester) ... ... ... ... | 15 | 7 |
| Harby to Nottingham (Notts) | 18 | 11 |
| | 33 | 18 |

## XXI

# FROM NORTHAMPTON TO THE WASH ON THE RIVER NENE.

AFTER a pleasant experience on the Great Ouse from Bedford to King's Lynn on the Wash, our party decided to spend the next vacation on the River Nene —or Nen—another important and neighbouring river in Northamptonshire. Northampton was practically the starting point for this cruise, although we really did our journey from Gayton or Blisworth on the Grand Junction Canal, thereby making the link of communication with that canal to the junction of the river. The distance is some five miles with seven locks, the greater number of which are grouped together not far from the start, and there is nothing much to remark about this portion, further than that it is kept in fair condition. It is a far cry from the London Docks, but barges are navigable from there right up to these parts. The Grand Junction referred to we had already navigated from Brentford to Braunston, Northants (some 95 miles), and by accomplishing these few miles we did still another of the numerous branches of this large canal system.

IRTHLINGBOROUGH, NORTHANTS,
The Village Cross.

OLD HOUSE AT LINCOLN OVER
THE CANAL.

At Northampton, our starting point for the Nene was Collins' boathouse at the bridge, and where we had procured our "good ship," a skiff, fully equipped for the voyage. Before going afloat we made a detour of the town, and viewed all the important sights, then, after obtaining our pass, paying the dues, and procuring the necessary lock keys, winches and crowbar, the captain gave the command "all aboard," and we were off on our long cruise.

Our crew was made up of three old river men and our usual handy man. I use the term "old," as it is just a quarter of a century since three of the present crew (with another for the present in South America) did a good day's work on the Thames, pulling in a skiff from Thames Ditton to Windsor Bridge and back in one day, a distance of about 45 miles. That trip, we well remember, was a non-stop one and was done under 12 hours.

We were all fit and ready for a spell of work, but with a useful breeze springing up, we were induced to hoist our sail to take advantage of it. The river is well known for its winding character, but notwithstanding, we sailed all the way down the 18½ miles to Irthlingborough under the most delightful and perfect conditions.

The locks were numerous and these we had to work ourselves. They are in fair condition, although requiring a deal of handling in some cases, through their comparative disuse. These occur about every mile or so, and consequently we had our work cut out for us, and we were at it all day from 10 a.m. until

9 p.m. After passing several small villages on the route we at length reached Irthlingborough, our halting place, where we put up at the Bull Inn.

We had all sorts of reports about the condition of the river, even to the extent that it would be impossible for us to navigate the through journey. As to this we were agreeably surprised, and we found, with one or two exceptions, as at Ditchford, where we encountered weeds and rushes, that it was a fine and attractive river, well worth doing.

Our progress was slow on this canalized river, with the lock stoppages, and instead of doing say 30 miles per day as we did on the Ouse, we could only manage about twenty miles on these reaches, and we found it would be impossible for our launch to travel on this waterway for the through journey.

The second day we were early astir and had the usual look round the town, in which there is not much to be seen except a town cross of apparent antiquity in the market square, but as to its history, there seems to be little local knowledge.

Irthlingborough is a comparatively large town of some 5,000 inhabitants, and, like Northampton, is also engaged in the boot-making industry.

Our crew was here reinforced by another member from town, "our medical" and strong man of the party, and now with a full crew of five, we were ready for anything, making up a pleasant party, keen on river and canal work.

And now for the Nene once more.

The favourable breeze continuing, we again hoisted

our sail, notwithstanding the restless energy of the crew, and soon we were spinning away down stream at a great pace. Nearing Woodford Mill, a pretty spot, the wind was blowing half a gale and away went the step of our mast, which mishap created "cussory" comment. This looked like upsetting our sailing programme, but we were fortunate to get our damage repaired, and were soon off again at full speed, and shortly after we came to Denford, a sleepy looking place where we landed for lunch by the lock side. Here the scenery is not quite so striking as on the earlier reaches, but it gradually improves as you progress, especially after Thrapston. This improvement continues until Lilford Lock is reached, and here the beauty of the surroundings attains its height; in fact it is described as the prettiest and most attractive scenery on the river.

We saw this to rare advantage, especially at the point near the lock where there is a picturesque bridge, and below is a fine old mansion, the property of Lord Lilford. One feature in these parts is the number of mills at the locks, mostly, however, now in disuse; another is the numerous church spires on the route, and never have we seen so many in all our wanderings. They pop up in all directions, even where there are no apparent signs of habitation. At one point—Thrapston—it is said that by going to the top of the rising ground, you can see as many as thirty-two of these prominent landmarks. None of the crew, however, showed any great desire to verify this, so we took it for granted. These steeples we

observed were all more or less of one type, there being a decided absence of the towers in Northants.

The lower locks on the route are well constructed and in better preservation than the others, having quite a modern appearance. This looks as if the Nene river authorities had made a good bid for traffic in the past, but the later encroachments of the railway companies had upset all chances of success commercially. This, in a word, is another example of the futile efforts to compete with the modern railways. The Commission on canals may do good, generally speaking, but I have come to the conclusion that it is simply a waste of time and money to try and develop them in many cases.* When canals proper were built, now about a century ago, the routes were chiefly along the valleys, being so constructed for economical reasons, whereas, perhaps, the populous towns do not generally lie on the canal routes, and it has been our experience that for miles and miles one traverses uninhabited country.

After sailing about three parts of our day's journey of 20 miles we at length reached Oundle (Northants) late in the evening. We had some difficulty in seeing our way in the dark, but finding a friendly pilot on the bridge, he directed us to row our craft under one of the side arches, where we pulled her up high and dry. Two of our crew went to the hotel to procure a trap to convey our baggage, and soon after we found ourselves safely housed at the Talbot Hotel as the town clock struck ten. Our stay at this hotel was a pleasant one. It is an old type of house with exceedingly

* See p. xviii.

interesting associations, as the very stones that the house is built of came from Fotheringay Castle, and the staircase, also from the old castle, is a fine example in old oak.

History relates that Mary, Queen of Scots, was imprisoned and beheaded in Fotheringay Castle, which was situated a short distance from Oundle, and James I demolished the castle to obliterate all associations of the place; and all that now remains is simply a cairn of stones.

Oundle, which is said to be a contraction in name of Avondale, is an old-fashioned town with no particular indication of how the inhabitants thrive, but the Grocers' Company of London have a fine large school here, of considerable architectural pretensions, and a large number of boys are educated here.

Again, in exceptionally fine weather, voted by some to be the hottest day of the year, we commenced our third day's voyage. The wind had entirely disappeared, so the crew at last had an opportunity of displaying their hitherto suppressed energy, and with plenty of good material to go on with, we made good progress. Peterborough (Northants) was to be our destination.

Pleasure boating is not much indulged in up this way, notwithstanding the natural advantages for it, but we were pleased to note that the Oundle school boys had their rowing club and boathouse. So far as we could trace, there are only a few motor boats on this river, one being a covered lifeboat, made into a

houseboat with a stern wheel arrangement. The weeds do not tend to encourage the pastime.

Our journey down was an agreeable surprise, as the scenery and surroundings were of such a character as to be quite a revelation to us, with the fine long stretches, ample water and well wooded banks. This is not confined to some reaches, but is continuous more or less, all the way down to Peterborough.

There is one thing that strikes the traveller coming down the Nene, and that is the paucity of towns or villages en route; in fact in such a populous county, from Northampton to Peterborough, in a distance of some 60 miles, we should reckon a couple of thousand would be a good estimate of the population, actually by the river bank. All this goes again to prove the contention as to the reason for the non-development of the waterways. It may, however, be said that the Nene Navigation is largely maintained and used for drainage purposes for which rates are levied on the adjoining lands. The Nene, with all its attractions, might be described as an unassuming river. Its flow is of a particularly slow character; in fact it is said to be the third slowest flowing river in Europe.

After a very pleasant run down stream we eventually reached Peterborough—that fine cathedral city—and here we put up at the Grand Hotel. At this point the river becomes tidal and we made an early start at 7.30 on our fourth day, so as to catch the ebb down to Sutton Bridge, 27 miles ahead. The course from Peterborough Bridge is an extraordinarily straight one, perhaps the straightest one in England for the

long distance. It is very uninteresting, and for the greater part of the way cannot be described much better than as a tidal waterway.

As it turned out, there was again a particularly fine breeze in our favour, and we hoisted our canvas once more, and sped down the whole distance to Sutton Bridge in fine style, and had as delightful an experience as one could wish for.

We passed Wisbech (Cambs) on the way and reached our destination shortly after noon, doing the 27 miles in 5 hours, or 5 miles an hour, a fine bit of sailing for such a craft as an ordinary Thames skiff.

It is curious to note how such a fine river should change its character so suddenly as it does, yet the same might be said of the Ouse from Denver Sluice to King's Lynn, where the river banks become steep and uninteresting. At some parts of the route even in the tidal way, it becomes so narrow that it is not even broad enough for sculling purposes. Navigation is carried on up to Peterborough, but not very satisfactorily, as the shallow depth of water at places is a drawback, and we passed four laden barges which had been there five days waiting for the better tides.

The Nene, strangely enough for such a lengthy river, has very few tributaries; and as to the tides they run very strong, with a heavy rise and fall in the lower reaches where the river becomes wider.

It may be mentioned that at Sutton Bridge there is a large disused dock of about 10 acres in extent, constructed some thirty years ago. Misfortune, however, overtook it, for just after everything was practically

completed and a steamer had made its entry, the dock collapsed through the action of shifting quicksands. It has never been repaired, and the money ventured was lost; and now it remains a melancholy derelict of wasted energies. Shipping, however, is carried on to Wisbech, about seven miles higher up the estuary, for steamers carrying up to as much as 2,000 tons.

Our impression of this river was a favourable one: with its natural beauties and attractions on the upper reaches, which came to us as a surprise, and we shall not readily forget our trip on the Nene.

The distances travelled were as follows:—

| | Miles. | Locks. | Staunch. |
|---|---|---|---|
| From Blisworth (Northants) to Northampton Grand Junction Canal ... ... | 5 | 7 | |
| Northampton to Irthlingborough ... ... ... | 18½ | 15 | 1 |
| Irthlingborough to Oundle | 19½ | 10 | 3 |
| Oundle to Peterborough ... | 22½ | 18 | 6 |
| Peterborough to Sutton Bridge (Lincs) ... ... | 27 | | |
| | 92½ | 50 | 10 |

LANGRICK FERRY,
On the Witham.
[CRUISE XXII.
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STRANGE-LOOKING CRAFT,
On the Fossdyke Canal.
[CRUISE XXIII.
*Page* 155.

RIVER WITHAM, AT BOSTON.

PLATE XXIV.

[CRUISE XXII.
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## XXII

# FROM BOSTON TO LINCOLN ON THE RIVER WITHAM.

FROM the River Nene, continuing our tour, we had our skiff entrained from Sutton Bridge to Boston (Lincs), some 30 miles' railway journey. There, on the following morning, we found our craft awaiting us at the Rowing Club's landing stage, close to the Tidal Lock known as the Grand Sluice. This lock is of considerable proportions, and was originally erected in 1764 at great cost, its object being also to hold up and utilize the water for distribution and draining purposes on the land along the banks of the Witham. Prior to that time the tide is said to have flowed up near to Lincoln City.

The River Witham rises in Rutlandshire, and flows in all some 80 miles; the navigable portion from Boston near the Wash to Lincoln is 36 miles in length. This was the scene of our excursion. At this latter place it joins the Fossdyke Canal, thereby making a through communication to the Trent and Humber from Boston. The Witham Navigation, after several proprietorships, is now owned by the Great Northern Railway Company; the traffic, however, is comparatively little on this waterway, the reason being that

the railway runs in such close proximity to the water course.

In bygone times monasteries were much in evidence on the banks of the Witham, so much so that it is said they were more numerous there than on any other river in England. It is characteristic to note in passing that wherever monasteries were situated, a river was always found adjacent, and there the monks indulged in their favourite pastime of fishing.

Our abode at Boston was the Peacock Hotel, and in the morning we took a ramble through this old-fashioned market town, and at one time an important seaport on the East Coast. Particularly interesting is the fine old church—St. Botolph's—with its remarkable tower known as the Boston Stump. It is a grand piece of work and stands some 270 feet in height, and is a conspicuous landmark for many miles around by land and sea.

We made our start up stream at noon under somewhat different conditions to our sailing experiences on the Nene. The wind overnight had risen to quite a gale and was blowing dead ahead. This being so we enlisted the services of a man to assist us in towing the boat, as progress by any other means was impossible, and, after extending our tow line to double the ordinary length so as to reach the towpath on the high banks, we at length got "under way." We learned that these strong gales are not infrequent in this part of the country, partly owing to the flat character of the Fen district.

We were only making headway of about a mile an

hour, as it was difficult work to get along. We found it the stiffest bit of towing we had ever experienced. On the route there is little to arrest the attention of the traveller, and the scenery from the river, partly obscured by the high banks, is generally of a commonplace character. There are long straight reaches on the course with a good depth of water; the width, too, is considerable, and continues so for about twelve miles up stream, when it narrows somewhat, and the surroundings as one progresses improve in some measure. On the route we came to the Bain River, this tributary leading to Horncastle, then to the Sleaford Canal Junction, but both these waterways are now reported to be in disuse. We also passed Langrick Ferry, likewise Tattersall with its bridge, castle and church—these places are mentioned as landmarks are few on this journey.

Later in the day the weather conditions improved and we made more progress, and eventually, after a hard day's work, reached Kirkstead Bridge, having travelled a distance of 16 miles without any lock interruptions, and here we left our boat for the night. Woodhall Spa was, however, our destination, over a mile inland from the riverside. This well-known place is described as the Queen of Health resorts, and we took advantage of our opportunity to view the surroundings. We stayed at the Hotel Victoria, a well-equipped modern house situated in its fine grounds of many acres, all adjoining the famous Bath and Pump Rooms to which visitors come from all parts in search of health. It is curious to

find such a popular resort situated in the midst of a flat and comparatively uninteresting country, as we found from the riverside approach ; but there the magic waters are !

The town reminded us of Droitwich, with its Baths and Sanatorium, where we stayed when on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal. Sitting in front of the hotel one watches with interest the continuous procession of people on their way to take the famous cure, a sight which brought to one's mind the pilgrimage to Lourdes. Woodhall Spa was a pleasant break in our journey, and on driving back to the Witham next morning, we took what is a favourite route and passed the ruins of Kirkstead Abbey, of great antiquity, dating back to 1139. Two of our crew had returned to town after doing the Nene, and here at Woodhall we lost the services of another of the party, who was *hors de combat* through a mishap. However, with some difficulty we again procured assistance, this time a youth from one of the farms, and we proceeded once more on our cruise. This lad, who was about 18 years old, had never been more than a mile or so on either side of the river banks from his native village, although he was by no means unintelligent. The local inlander, as a rule, does not take kindly to the water, although he is to be found as a keen fisherman in some parts.

In starting on this our second day on the river, the wind, although still against us, had abated considerably, and we were at last able to do some sculling at intervals. There is no doubt that the Witham, with

its low running current, is a good waterman's stream and an enjoyable one to row on, although the monotony of the surroundings makes it somewhat uninteresting travelling. At various points en route there are pumping stations for draining the water off the land after the floods, this being necessary as the water at times rises considerably up the high river banks. The pumps are likewise used for irrigation purposes at other times.

We landed at Bardney Village on the right bank, and thereafter our course took us sharply to the right to Bardney Lock, the only one on the through route which leads through a long cutting. We had a talk with the old lock-keeper, who turned out to be rather a character. He had been for nearly twenty years at this lock, and previously had been a passenger guard, but afterwards was given this post. When he heard we had travelled all the way from Northampton, he expressed considerable surprise, and ejaculated "Well! that licks fire," and we had to explain our route to overcome his disbelief. Others we spoke to as we went along considered it an ideal type of holiday, which appealed to them as just the way they would like to roam about and enjoy themselves. Here at Bardney the piscatorial art is much indulged in, and as many as 500 fishermen had come from Sheffield a few days previously to our visit to take part in a fishing competition for which prizes were distributed.

At last we reached Lincoln, and from the river one gets an excellent view of the famous cathedral on the

hill. Nearing our destination for the day we now approached the lock just outside the town, to find it closed for the day (7 p.m.), but after some gentle persuasion the lock-keeper let us through the gates. We were glad of this, as boats cannot be very well left thereabouts with any safety. After going through the canal cutting which leads through the town, we arrived at Brayford Pool, a large expanse of water which might be described as the " Port " of Lincoln, and there we got our gear stored. We then made our way to the Saracen's Head Hotel, a good old-fashioned Lincolnshire hostelry, where we put up for the night.

So finished our cruise on the Witham, and we were glad to have done it, thus adding to our list another geographical experience.

The distances covered were :—

| | Miles. | Locks. |
|---|---|---|
| From Boston (Grand Sluice) to Kirkstead Bridge, Lincs ... ... ... | 16 | 1 |
| From Kirkstead Bridge to Lincoln (near Woodhall Spa) ... ... ... | 16 | 2 |
| | 32 | 3 |

## XXIII

# FROM LINCOLN TO THE TRENT ON THE FOSSDYKE CANAL.

After our experience on the River Witham, we went on from Brayford Mere or Pool, to another waterway being a continuation of the course, viz., the Fossdyke (or Lincoln Fosse) Canal. The stay at Lincoln was a pleasant one. The cathedral, with its commanding situation, is a striking edifice; it ranks high as a fine example of early British architecture, and is well worth visiting. The monster bell, "Great Tom," weighing over five tons, is on the main tower, and has more than local repute; and the Lincoln Imp—a noted tiny piece of sculpture high up in the interior of the cathedral building—was also not overlooked.

At last we found ourselves by the waterside at Brayford and made a start on the remainder of our cruise in Lincolnshire. This canal has rather a noteworthy reputation, and is credited with being one of the most ancient artificial waterways at present in use in this country; its original construction dates back to the time of the Romans.

Although only eleven miles in length there is very considerable traffic on it to Lincoln—chiefly from the Trent direction. The concern has passed through many controls, but is now managed by the Great

Northern and the Great Eastern Joint Railways. Of good dimensions, it is well maintained and the route makes a through communication from Boston to the Humber, via Lincoln and the River Trent, a distance in all of just under 90 miles. Most of the traffic is conveyed by horse haulage and the craft used, chiefly Yorkshire keels, ranging to 100 tons or more, are dragged along at about two miles an hour from a tow-path some ten feet above the water level, and this runs the whole length of the route. Proceeding on our course at a bend of the canal we suddenly saw four keel ketches all close together carrying quite a lot of canvas—large main and top square sails and these formidable looking craft with a fair wind drifted slowly along. A somewhat curious sight it was, with such a rig, showing all the canvas set, and for the moment the fleet looked like the approach of a miniature Armada.

Like the Witham, there is not much to describe about the scenery on this waterway, the country all around being flat and uninteresting.

As one travels along there are long straight stretches and cuttings (the Romans in road making also invariably adopted the direct course) and the route passes no place of importance. Saxilby and Skellingthorpe were the only small towns on the way. There were consequently very few people about. The Fossdyke, like the Witham, is much frequented by anglers and the week before our visit a large peg down competition was held when as many as 1,050 fishermen competed at one time. These devotees were from

the Midlands chiefly, and again the "Man from Sheffield" was much in evidence. Described as being rather a motley crew, they arrived by excursion trains, accompanied by their wives, sisters, cousins and aunts, and in many cases the men had rushed off from their work to the trains in their artisan garb, right on to the fishing ground. We came across dozens of the used peg down tickets strewn on the banks.

Along the canal the railway runs parallel to the water course and also to the roadway at places, so that with the canal itself there are three different means of communication all running alongside each other, a curious circumstance well worthy of note.

At length, on the sixth day of our cruise, we arrived at Torksey, our destination, and so finished our Lincolnshire trip, which proved a very pleasant one, the time having passed all too rapidly.

There is only one lock on this canal, and that at the junction with the River Trent, and here there is a pumping station for supplying water when required from the river for the canal. The boat we sent back to Northampton; and we entrained to Retford to catch the Scotch express to Edinburgh, there to pursue our travels elsewhere on the Caledonian and other Scotch Canals.

The waterways traversed on this tour were the River Nene, the River Witham and the Fossdyke Canal, altogether making up a distance of 140 miles from Northampton by water.

## XXIV

# FROM EDINBURGH TO THE CLYDE ON THE UNION CANAL.

FEW indeed are the tourists who find their way from Edinburgh to the Highlands by the route we travelled —via the Union, locally known as the Edinburgh and Glasgow, Canal, and the Forth and Clyde Canal—to Bowling on the Clyde. Our experience proved it to be an interesting route.

We had just finished our cruise in England on the River Nene (Northants), the River Witham and the Fossdyke Canal (Lincs) to the Trent, and then we proceeded to Edinburgh by rail, where we had a pleasant sojourn.

This means of communication, although novel to us, was not a new one; in the early days, before the advent of railways, there was an "express" service for passengers in narrow boats or barges to the West of Scotland. This water route was an alternative to the other mode of travelling—by coach, when the journey occupied many hours.

Provided with a smart white painted gig—tight, staunch, and trim and equipped for the voyage, we found the craft ready for us at Port Hopetoun, which is situated on the west side of Edinburgh; and from there we made the start on our excursion to the Clyde.

ON THE EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW CANAL.

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ON THE EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW CANAL.

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PLATE XXV.

The distance from the Edinburgh terminus of the Union Canal to the junction of the Forth and Clyde Canal at Camelon (Stirlingshire) is 32 miles. There are no locks in the whole of this 32 miles until the latter place is reached. Thus the boating man has the advantage of travelling on one of the longest uninterrupted stretches in the country.

The canal is controlled by the North British Railway Company, whose railway line runs parallel for a considerable part of the journey.

After getting clear of Edinburgh the route becomes interesting, and we pass some beautiful avenues of trees, and the fine range of the Pentland Hills shows up to rare advantage.

On the earlier part of the route, too, there are three acqueducts of considerable proportions: over the Water of Leith, the River Avon and the River Almond. The last-mentioned opens up from the towpath a commanding view, and, the river being then in heavy flood, the tumbling brackish water made a striking picture.

Several boating clubs—the St. Andrew's and the University Clubs being the chief—carry on their pastime on this waterway a few miles out from Edinburgh on the Slateford and Hermiston Reaches. These are old institutions, and although the boating is naturally restricted they are clubs of some importance.

Our start was late in the day, and we here experienced bad weather, which rather retarded our progress; however, although it was getting late, we resolved to make for Linlithgow, a distance of 21 miles

from Edinburgh. This we managed after some hard sculling and towing along the towpath, and reached our destination about 9.30 p.m. After some difficulty we found the Star and Garter Inn, which our party filled.

Nearing the town we hoisted our sail to take advantake of an aft-breeze, and in the darkness our white canvas and boat looked somewhat weird. Here we encountered a barge being towed, and the horse, becoming rather curious and restive at seeing this apparently phantom ship, turned and bolted at the sight. Eventually, after some delay, we safely managed to pass, and the canal boatmen, concerned at the prospect of possible further trouble ahead, shouted out in pronounced doric " Are there 'ony mair o' ye comin'!"

Our stay at Linlithgow we enjoyed. The town in itself is of a straggling character, but the chief attraction of the place is the old palace, which is of historic interest. It was all the more so to us, as we had come from Fotheringay Castle on the Nene (Northamptonshire) the previous week, and there was the strange coincidence that Linlithgow was the birthplace of Mary Queen of Scots, whereas it was at Fotheringay where she was beheaded. The castle is in wonderful preservation, and history records that it was last inhabited in the year 1746.

There are examples of old carvings on the walls, one representing the Rose of England, the Thistle of Scotland, the Prince of Wales Feathers, and the Fleur de Lys of France, all clustered together. A loch partly

encircling the grounds greatly enhances the scene. The weather, which had been struggling to keep fair, at last gave way, and we had heavy rain storms, with strong head winds. However, we decided to proceed. This compelled us to take recourse to towing, and we engaged a man to assist us. We reached Falkirk, an important town on the route, after passing through a tunnel some 700 yards in length.

Shortly after Camelon is reached. There we took the boat out of the water and had it conveyed by a van over the eleven locks all grouped together down to the junction of the Forth and Clyde Canal.

The town of Camelon was in very ancient days said to be a seaport; and it was also a centre of the nail making industry, many hundreds of men being employed.

The scenery up to this point has maintained itself and is of quite a pleasing character, and altogether we must vote the Union Canal well worthy of a visit.

Distance travelled:—

| | Miles. | Locks. |
|---|---|---|
| Edinburgh to Linlithgow ... ... ... | 21 | 0 |
| Linlithgow to Camelon ... ... ... ... | 11 | 11 |
| | 32 | 11 |

## XXV

# FORTH AND CLYDE CANAL.

FOLLOWING on our tour of the Union Canal we continued our through voyage from Camelon, the junction to the Forth and Clyde Canal. This canal enters at the Firth of Forth, and extends from Grangemouth (four miles eastwards from our starting point) to Bowling, a distance in all of 36 miles, thus making a through communication between the Forth and the Clyde.

There has been frequent agitation from time to time as to the desirability of constructing a Ship Canal to enable war vessels to pass through between these two seas; and with the new naval base at Rosyth on the Forth, one might predict its accomplishment at some future time.

The Forth and Clyde Canal is in many respects similar to the Union we have just left, except that it is extensively used commercially between Glasgow and other places on the route. The scenery, however, is not so attractive or picturesque. Our stopping place after a run of 25 miles was Kirkintilloch, and although a

THE FORTH AND CLYDE CANAL,
Near Kilpatrick. [CRUISE XXV.

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THE CRINAN CANAL (ARGYLLSHIRE).
[CRUISE XXVI.

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PLATE XXVI.

large and busy town, we were unable to find accommodation, so we railed to Glasgow, some miles off, and stayed there overnight, returning the next morning. Proceeding on our journey we encountered many locks, including a group of 11, over which we transported our boat by cart to save time, and after a 17 mile journey we at length reached Bowling, the terminus of this canal.

## XXVI

# THE CALEDONIAN CANAL.

Our next programme was to explore the Caledonian Canal, through Inverness-shire, a far cry from the Clyde, so we railed our boat to Fort William, the party travelling by steamer via Dunoon by the well-known West Coast Steamer "Columba" to Ardrishaig in Argyllshire.

Thereafter we transferred to another little steamer, the "Linnet," and so navigated the Crinan Canal, some nine miles long through lovely Highland scenery. We again changed to another steamer, when we sailed right up the West Coast of Scotland to Fort William, a delightful cruise.

Here we found our boat awaiting us, and we now began our Caledonian Canal cruise, starting from Corpach.

The Caledonian Canal has been so often described that we do not enter into details further than to say we traversed the whole distance of 60 miles from Corpach to Inverness. It was a great experience, and possibly rather a foolhardy one considering the somewhat dangerous navigation on these large lochs with the type of boat we used. However, we safely accomplished the

ON THE CALEDONIAN CANAL.

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THE CALEDONIAN CANAL (INVERNESS-SHIRE, N.B.).

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PLATE XXVII.

journey. The only drawback on this tour was the unsettled weather: in these lochs one gets many startling "samples" of the Highland climate.

The grand and varied scenery along the route was, it is needless to say, highly appreciated, and now we finish what was a continuous tour of nearly three weeks' duration, the total distance covered on the actual waterway journeys being 260 miles, viz.:—

| | Miles. |
|---|---|
| The River Nene from Northampton ... ... ... | 90 |
| The River Witham from Boston ... ... ... | 36 |
| The Fossdyke Canal from Lincoln ... ... ... | 11 |
| The Union or Edinburgh and Glasgow Canal | 32 |
| The Forth and Clyde Canal from near Falkirk | 31 |
| The Caledonian Canal from near Fort William | 60 |
| | 260 |

## XXVII

# ON THE GRAND MILITARY CANAL FROM RYE TO HYTHE AND SANDGATE

THE Whitsun vacation being on us, we decided to spend the holiday by doing another of our land and water trips and motoring through Mid-Kent to Rye, in Sussex, thereafter navigating the Royal Military Canal, which runs from a point near to Rye to Hythe and Sandgate, Kent, some 21 miles distance. Our motor run through Kent opened up new ground, and again showed to us the varied and rich character of that fine county so aptly described as the Garden of England.

Soon we reached Rye and put up there for the night. This old town—one of the Cinque Ports—has many attractions, and tourists who love quaint places and antique surroundings cannot do better than spend a few days at this pleasant corner in Sussex. The view from the end of the main street, situated on a promontory, is very fine, and we saw it to every advantage under perfect weather conditions. One can hardly credit that at one time the sea approached close to the town and that the adjacent land has been reclaimed.

Starting next morning we made for our canal excur-

VIEWS ON THE GRAND MILITARY CANAL (KENT).

[CRUISE XXVII.

PLATE XXVIII.

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sion and motored some two miles to where the Grand Military Canal begins, and here we found our craft, a double-sculling skiff, which had been sent on from Hythe for the trip.

Strangely enough in all our many experiences of canal travelling we had never heard before of this waterway from Rye to Sandgate, nor had we seen it mentioned in the numerous guide-books on English Canals. However, we were amply repaid for exploring these parts.

Notwithstanding the designation we could procure little information as to its historical association, further than to learn it was constructed for warfare and strategic purposes in the time of Napoleon I, who then threatened to invade this country. On either side there are high banks or mounds built, no doubt, for defensive purposes, and further the canal was peculiarly constructed in so far that a definite method had been adopted, by having long straight cuttings, and these were continued for a quarter to half a mile or so, at the end of which course they took a sharp bend, and this plan was carried out all along the route.

From what we could learn we came to the conclusion that this was done to fortify the position, and by placing guns at each end of these cuttings any troops attempting to cross the canal would be immediately under fire, and the defensive troops would have the whole distance of each cutting under control.

The canal serves no commercial purpose whatever, and might be said to start as it were from nowhere in particular, and along the whole course there are no

business places of any description. It is from 30 to 40 feet wide with about four feet depth of water.

There is another striking feature of this canal, and that is on the north bank there is a fine belt of trees which ranges along the whole 21 miles of the route. These are planted every 30 feet or so apart and are fine specimens, chiefly ash and elm trees, and stand possibly about 60 or 70 feet high, which command attention. In some parts, too, the trees are planted on both sides of the canal, thereby making picturesque avenues.

There is little obstruction on the canal and only one lock, at the Rye end, which leads to the sea, but this is not now in use. There are a number of bridges to negotiate en route, also a couple of easy portages to be got over, the last being some three miles from Hythe, where the canal is dammed up, but the water continues its course at a higher level on the other side right up to Sandgate.

From the beginning to the end of the route there are no towns, and only one or two straggling villages, and during all the journey we did not meet more than a score of people, so that civilization is at a discount in these parts. We only came across a few skiffs and canoes, and a couple of small motor boats, all privately owned, on the canal. At Hythe, however, boating is very popular, and the boatman, W. Gravener, from whom we had our skiff had some 90 craft of all descriptions for letting-out purposes.

I should say that in the course of our journey we sailed nearly half the distance. Thereafter we towed

a part of the way from a good grassy towpath, and then sculled the remainder of the way. The Commissioners of the Romney Marsh Levels maintain the waterway chiefly, the Hythe authorities doing the rest, and, considering it is a disused canal, it is kept in excellent order. Being early in the year we had little weed trouble, and any we did encounter was only for some 200 yards not far from the start.

We found the Grand Military Canal a fine waterway, and no pleasanter trip could be undertaken, particularly from a sculling point of view, and it seems strange to credit the fact that the journey is very seldom made.

We found the car awaiting us at Sandgate and made for Folkestone, a few miles off. There we stayed over night and part of the next day, making a pleasant change by the seaside after our experience. Thereafter we proceeded to Canterbury, where we spent a delightful time looking through the old city with its beautiful cathedral. Soon after we found ourselves spinning along homeward bound, all pleased with ourselves and our holiday.

## XXVIII

# HOLIDAY LIFE ON THE NORFOLK BROADS.

I HAVE spent many varied holidays in my time, including golfing on many courses, in motor boating and boating on the River Thames, and have navigated practically every waterway south of the Humber, also in motoring many thousands of miles in England and Scotland, but the Norfolk Broads, which were hitherto only a name to me, have been entirely a novel and delightful experience.

So at last I have made my long-desired visit to these haunts, and to one who has any love of the water, and motor boating and yachting in particular, without the sea unpleasantness, one cannot find a more congenial —shall I say—"hunting ground." When one is made aware that there are some 200 miles of good navigable waterways confined to a particular county, it is hardly credible; but so it is. These are scattered over a very wide area and are nearly all negotiable from one to the other, by broad rivers of considerable depth.

Chief of these are the Yare, Waveney, Bure, Thurne and Ant, each leading to their respective broads or meres, extending inland from Yarmouth to Lowestoft. The numerous craft on these broads are of a varied character, but the typical Norfolk wherry, or residential barge-yacht, with its huge single sail

LIFE ON THE NORFOLK BROADS.

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and heavy mast placed right forward, is perhaps the most popular. These pleasure vessels are generally chartered by the week or month, have ample accommodation for large parties, and many there are who take advantage of this kind of holiday afloat as each season comes round.

With all the freedom of gipsy life it makes a delightful change from the ordinary conventional manner of spending a vacation.

These wherries, so identified with the Broads life, are much in evidence at all points over the course. They are easily handled and sail steadily along in their own stately way with the aid of comparatively little wind, and cover many miles a day, laying up each night at a different mooring place, making it an ever-changing scene as the voyage progresses.

Besides these there are many other types of craft about, ranging from the usual yacht rig to all kinds of yachts, cruisers, sailing and rowing boats, also dinghies and fishing punts.

The motor boat especially has made great strides on the Broads, and there is no more excellent scope for the pastime, and many smart craft are to be seen on these ideal waters.

With such advantages for motor boating and sailing it becomes at once a veritable yachtsman's paradise.

To many, it may be added, fishing is a particular attraction, and anglers come in great numbers to ply their gentle art, and quite successfully, too, on these expansive broads.

The scenery around is perhaps not imposing, owing to the flat nature of the country, but it is pleasing withal, the perspective being relieved by an occasional church spire, or perhaps some little hamlet showing up in the distance. There are, too, the striking windmills dotted over the whole area of the Broads, making picturesque landmarks, alone worth seeing. These windmills were, and are, used for pumping accumulated water out of the marshy ground into the cuttings that lead into the main channels.

The old churches on the route as one travels along are well worth visiting, at least to those so interested, and these have particularly antiquated interiors, dating back to the 11th and 13th centuries. Likewise there may be seen some old abbey ruins, all bringing to one's mind the ancient days.

In navigating the Broads there are no obstacles to overcome, except the interruption of a bridge here and there, necessitating the lowering of the mast, but they are few and far between.

I have touched chiefly on the pleasure sailing on these waters, but there is large intercommunication in commercial trading, the craft utilized being of the hitherto described wherry type up to about 80 tons burden. These waterways are controlled chiefly by the Great Yarmouth Port and Haven Commissioners, who have extensive powers in carrying out their work on these " inland seas."

In addition to the " sailers " and motor boats there are a number of roomy and luxurious houseboats afloat (a few having auxiliary motive power), some-

what like those to be seen on the Thames, and which are occupied during the season.

Bungalow life, too, is becoming more and more popular, and many are the styles of attractive little residences on the banks of the river, with their sloping lawns reaching down to the water's edge.

The Norfolk Broads are altogether unique in their way to the yachtsman and motor boatman, and singularly so, as nowhere in the British Isles can such facilities be found as there are in this quiet corner of Norfolk.

All these attractions go to add to the enhancement of the surroundings, but what is wanted most of all in making such excursions a success is the best of weather, and, given that, no more pleasurable time could be spent than in taking a holiday on the Norfolk Broads.

## XXIX

# A TRIP TO CANVEY ISLAND AT THE MOUTH OF THE THAMES.

WHERE is Canvey Island? Such is the query raised when one is asked concerning this unfrequented old world place, and curiosity led us to pay a visit there.

The man in the street has only a hazy idea of its whereabouts, and anyone who has actually been there is seldom met with : all this notwithstanding that it is within thirty miles of our populous London.

The writer, sailing down the Lower Thames en route to the North by the East Coast steamers, used to conjecture what the conspicuous looking edifice was standing absolutely by itself and showing up so clearly on the coast line. Well, this, as it turns out to be, is the very abode where we find ourselves so comfortably housed on Canvey Island.

The Hotel Kynoch, as it is named, is a pleasant holiday residence, particularly for those who are lovers of the sea and shipping. Facing as it does the River Thames, it commands a veritable panorama of the continuous movements of every description of craft sailing to and from all parts of the world. With good marine glasses, too, one can decipher the names of the different vessels passing up and down the river.

THE VILLAGE PUMP AND OLD DUTCH COTTAGE,
At Canvey.

CROSSING THE FERRY, CANVEY ISLAND (ESSEX).

The headquarters of several river yacht clubs are here, and there is no more convenient house of call on the lower estuary. Travelling from London by way of Romford, Brentwood, Billericay, Wickford, Rayleigh, to South Benfleet, we covered a distance of about 41 miles from the Mansion House. At South Benfleet we left the car and ferried across to the island.

Close to the station we crossed the ferry at full tide in a somewhat crude boat or cobble, to the scene of our explorations.

Canvey Island, situated on the east side of the Essex coast, is thirty-six miles from London Bridge by water, and lies, it might be said, roughly speaking, midway between Gravesend and Southend, and at the last census it had a population of only 300 persons.

The island is some three miles broad by six miles long, and 21 miles round, and is banked up all round by a substantial sea wall, 10ft. to 15ft. above the sea level. This sea wall was constructed by Dutch settlers there in the 16th century, and is a splendid piece of work. Sir Charles Vermuyden was the Dutch engineer, and he was also responsible for the irrigation of the island.

There is also a second wall or breakwater on part of the foreshore on the Thames side a little way from the main dyke, and this is the means of retaining the water, and so avoiding the long stretches of mud so prevalent in other places along the coast. In contrast to these, however, there are several bays close by with fine white sand on the beach.

We traversed the whole circuit of the island on the

narrow little pathway on the sea wall, which only just enables one to walk thereon, and although it is somewhat rough at places, we managed fairly comfortably, and so gained an excellent idea of the lie of the land and the surroundings generally. The roadways proper on the island are somewhat primitive, and the motor-car has not found its way there, to stay at least, but the motor boat is becoming more and more in evidence round these shores.

The property, some 4,400 acres in all, is let out for farming purposes, and excellent pasturage and arable land it makes.

The Chapman light, by the way, a well-known sea mark, is situate quite close to the shore on the eastward side where it stands out prominently.

Efforts have been made again and again to develop the island, but, with the exception of some bungalows built for summer residence, everything remains in pretty well its early state.

Some years ago a so-called winter garden, with many small wooden houses attached, and a large building under glass, said to have cost in all some £12,000, was erected close to the Benfleet side, but these structures, with all their attractions, have been doomed to failure, and the place is now a scene of dilapidation and desolation; in fact, it presents a very sorry picture indeed. An electric tram was also built to Leigh Beach, at that time a small fishing village, but this has also shared the misfortune of the larger scheme.

In walking round the island or wall thereof we pass

Holehaven, an important coastguard station, where some coastguard officials are stationed on duty to watch the Lower Thames against mythical pirates and smugglers, who have now ceased to exist, although in bygone times, it is said, a profitable clandestine business was carried on. It is an interesting spot, where the men are well housed at their clean and well-appointed station. Kynochtown, where the well-known firm of Messrs. Kynoch carry on an extensive gunpowder business, is just across the water from here on the mainland.

There is an inn I should mention near by—the Lobster Smack—which is near a favourite landing place for yachtsmen and motor boat crews.

Historical information as to the island generally is rather scarce and unreliable, and anything that is known is more or less of a traditional character. The Danes held sway here, and later on, in the time of Charles II, the Dutch, and there are numerous and distinct traces of the latter still extant.

It is said locally that the Dutch services in the church here were ministered in that language until a few generations back, and there are two peculiar Dutch built cottages now standing, erected in 1621, which give picturesque and interesting evidence of that period. To-day, it may be mentioned, Dutch eel boats come to and moor at Holehaven, this being the only remaining association of the past inhabitants.

The drinking water on the island is very scarce, but there is in Canvey village an old iron pump which,

besides being a landmark, produces exceptionally good water.

It does seem strange that this island, with its easy access and considerable charm of quietude, is so little appreciated—so near Southend and Westcliff, too, with their thousands of visitors—but No! the tourist does not go there, even with all its advantages for the rest cure and health generally. The Englishman prefers to stick to the mainland; he does not brook to recognize the "adjacent isles," and so Canvey Island in this 20th century is still left severely alone.

MAP OF THE RIVER SEVERN VALLEY,

From Shrewsbury to Worcester.

(1) The Abbey Church, Shrewsbury; (2) Wenlock Abbey; (3) Chapter House, Haughmond Abbey, Shrewsbury; (4) Ludlow Castle; (5) Buildwas Abbey; (6) Ludlow Castle; (7) Gatehouse, Whitehall, Shrewsbury; (8) Hereford Cathedral; (9) English Bridge, Shrewsbury; (10) Worcester Cathedral.

*Reproduced by permission of Mr. E. Francis Thornewill and the proprietors of "The Motor."*

## XXX

# FROM SHREWSBURY TO WORCESTER ON THE UPPER SEVERN.

After our many and varied cruises we elected to spend a holiday on the upper reaches of the River Severn, *i.e.*, that navigable portion from Shrewsbury (Salop) down stream to Worcester, a distance of 60 miles. We had already done the Lower Severn from Gloucester to Worcester, some 30 miles by motor boat, and by accomplishing the present trip from Shrewsbury the total distance covered on this river is 90 miles.

We, that is our crew of three men, entrained at Euston Station and reached our objective, Shrewsbury, early one summer evening (1915), where we made all arrangements about the boat that was to do service for the trip.

Shrewsbury is a particularly interesting place, full of historic and legendary associations, even to the Shrewsbury Cake Shop, referred to in the "Ingoldsby Legends." Our only regret in leaving there was that we had no longer time to inspect the charming old town. Our stay was at the Crown Hotel, a well appointed and comfortable house.

Proceeding to the river next morning we found our craft, a double sculling skiff, ready for us at the boat-

house (Mr. Cooper's) not far from the town, and near to the well-known Shrewsbury School.

There was an ample supply of good water—more than we expected—with a fairly broad waterway; and from here we started on our voyage. There are directions as to the navigation on this river which are chiefly "keep to the left," and that we found invariably to be the course on our way down.

Some half a mile on our course we came to a weir where we had to effect a portage down a long sloping platform. Here we thought it would be more advantageous if rollers were laid down and so facilitate this rather laborious operation.

As we continued our cruise we got into long stretches of deep water, then suddenly the course changed, and we encountered shallows. There was a good deal of keel scraping, but we soon again found deeper water.

The river, as we found it, was somewhat lower than its normal state, and this made the shallows referred to all the more troublesome. We had at an early stage of our journey to dispense with our foot gear and to do some wading to enable us to push the boat along at places. There is not much danger in so doing, although caution is necessary.

The impression we formed of this river as we got along was a favourable one. There is little, however, of the surrounding country so far to attract attention as the banks on either side stand rather high, but

that is compensated by the beautiful foliage on the banks.

Down our route we passed no towns or villages of any sort, all that is to be seen is an occasional cottage by the riverside, and, with the exception of a few fishermen plying their gentle art, we met very few people.

Some few miles down is the mouth of the River Tern—a tributary—and near there we landed for lunch. This we fortunately brought with us, as it would have been impossible to procure any food en route on our voyage.

We came across some fine bridges of considerable architectural pretensions—much more so than one usually finds on such rivers. Now we view ahead of us a well-known landmark in these parts, the Wreckin, a conspicuous and well-wooded hill 1,335 feet in height. It is observed for miles and miles round, and in sculling along one never seems to get away from it as it shows up unexpectedly at all points on this tortuous course.

Ironbridge was our destination. We landed there about 7.m., the distance of 21 miles being sculled by two of our crew. Not a bad day's work we thought, and glad we were when we arrived at our hostelry for the night—the Tontine Hotel. This is a sleepy old place in the Severn Valley, amidst beautifully wooded surroundings, but the scene is much marred by ugly ironworks in this locality.

At one time barges, carrying up to 60 tons burden,

navigated up to this point, and we came across some inhabitants who remembered their trading. This navigation, of course, could only be carried on when the river was in flood.

There are several bridges approaching Ironbridge, the chief, a road one, in the town itself, being rather an imposing structure of considerable height with a large single span. The date thereon shows that it was built in 1779, and the town is well named, as it is said to be called after it.

It is interesting to note that one John Wilkinson, a large iron founder, about 100 years ago, was reputed to have built the first iron boat ever made which was launched here.

I should also mention that at Dawley, a few miles from Ironbridge, the renowned Captain Webb—hero of the Channel swim—was born, and a memorial fountain has been erected there to his memory.

Resuming our journey next morning we continued our course down stream. Reports led us to understand we would have some trouble on the early part of our course, owing to the low state of the water for the next mile or two, and this we found to be the case. The first rapids we encountered we might have shot, but caution was the order of the day. We had the boat let down stream by the aid of a very long tow rope, which we had fortunately brought with us, and thus we let her drift down, the rope being held over a long wall of rock.

Beyond this a further shallow presented itself, where there was a strong current and the channel ran

ARLEY FERRY (THE SEVERN).

HOLT FLEET.

SHREWSBURY.

ON THE UPPER SEVERN.

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close into trees and bushes on the river bank. However, with the assistance of a local man and one of our crew remaining on board, we at length, after much difficulty, had the skiff let down as before to the extent of the rope's length. We took the remaining portion of the rapid, refastening the rope again to the boat, and so repeated the first operation.

Had we known what really was ahead of us we would have had our skiff transported by van the 1½ miles, and so we would have avoided all this trouble I have described.

These shallows delayed us well on for two hours, but, after all this trouble we proceeded satisfactorily. What we experienced on this journey was that we got long runs and good water, and these continued a mile or so, when we had to shoot some rapids which were easily managed, but care must be taken to keep the proper course. These, however, can readily be detected as you approach them by the appearance of the surface, the current forming what is like the letter V shape, and this indicates the right channel. We became quite experts at "shooting the shoot," and this little excitement we rather enjoyed than otherwise.

After our experience we should advise intending tourists before making such a trip to enquire beforehand; if there were sufficient water in the river the cruise would be undertaken under better and easier conditions.

At length we reached Bridgnorth, some seven miles from our start. This is a quaint town, strikingly

situated on a high rock, and here we landed to inspect the place.

There is a curious cliff railway or lift here with a double line that conveys passengers up the steep hill-side to the town, and this we took advantage of. We found the town well worth visiting, and a magnificent view is obtained from the top of the promontory. The Town Hall, at the end of the main street, is built on arched columns, and is a conspicuous old building.

Continuing our water journey we encountered more shallows for a considerable distance, both above and below the fine old bridge at Bridgnorth, but by getting the assistance of a youthful pilot aboard we got through the channel without trouble. After this we again came into fine long reaches of deep water, and had the wind been in the same direction as it was on our start we would have been enabled to do some fine sailing, but luck was against us. On previous trips our mode of progression was varied by sailing or towing, but in this instance we had to scull all the way.

We now passed through a tract of delightful country, and saw some fine country seats en route; these pleasing vistas amply repaid us for undertaking this excursion.

At last we finished our day's work and reached Arley Ferry at 7 p.m., after nine hours of almost continuous sculling. There we discovered a well-appointed little hostelry—the Valentia Hotel—situated in a little village amidst charming rural surroundings, and there we stayed for the night.

With regrets we left Arley next morning, as we thought this was just the spot where one would like to linger longer and meander round this interesting place. In perfect weather we proceeded on our voyage, and, with a greater volume of water to help us, more satisfactory progress was made.

We then came to the end of the rapids, but, with the better stream referred to, we managed these quite easily.

We next passed Bewdley—four miles down from Arley—and then we came into the county of Worcester. Again we passed through more attractive scenery, and the Blackstone Rock demanded special attention, the high cliff showing up grandly on the left bank.

After our meanderings we at last reached more civilized country, landing at Stourport, an important town, on the route. The river generally bears resemblance to the Thames, and all sorts and descriptions of boats, houseboats and motor boats are to be found here. This was a surprise after our 50 miles journey, as up to this point we had the river entirely to ourselves. Below Stourport Bridge the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal enters the Severn. This canal leads to the Trent and Mersey Canal, and some miles down stream the Worcester and Birmingham Canal also enters the Severn.

The river here assumes a greater width and a better one for boating could not be visited. What struck us particularly on approaching Holt Fleet — a

popular rendezvous for the excursionist—was the number of large passenger launches plying for hire on the river. These were well patronized.

As we approached Worcester there was plenty of life on the river, and many campers under canvas were to be seen, and we also noticed many attractive bungalow residences on the river banks.

After passing through three rather large locks grouped not far from each other—the only ones on our course—we at length reached our destination, Worcester Bridge. A stalwart member of the crew and I sculled the whole distance, 60 miles in the three days, under the able guidance of our steersman, who safely piloted us over the many rapids. The trip was a delightful one, the weather ideal—an important factor—and altogether it was a pronounced success.

The skiff was railed back to Shrewsbury, and we hied back to London after a very pleasant holiday.

Woodbridge Press, Ltd., Onslow Street, Guildford.

*Third Edition.* *Six Shillings net.*

# MY HOLIDAYS ON INLAND WATERWAYS

By P. BONTHRON.

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## Excerpts from some of the Reviews of the First and Second Editions.

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*The Times*, January 13, 1916.

His book is full of suggestive information for other explorers, usefully amplified by pictures, tables of distance, and a map. He rightly says of the majority of English canals that "the great charm is that one is far from the beaten track, and human beings are few and far between."

*The Daily Telegraph*, June 20, 1916.

Mr. P. Bonthron, of the British Motor Boat Club, has explored the canals and rivers of Great Britain with the enthusiasm of an expert waterman and the keen eye of a lover of natural beauty, and into *My Holidays on Inland Waterways* he has crowded the experiences of 2,000 miles of cruising by motor-boat and pleasure skiff. It is a delightful holiday book, invaluable to the lover of boating.

*Morning Post*, August 25, 1916.

This is the best holiday-book we have seen so far; it should bring its author in a crowd of disciples.

*Sunday Times and Sunday Special*, May 7, 1916.

This book fills a distinct gap in the library of the river devotee and the would-be explorer alike, as it brings within the limits of a conveniently sized volume a vast amount of correlated information which, for the most part, has hitherto only been available in rather a scattered form.

*Royal Geographical Magazine*, October, 1916.

There is still plenty of scope for holiday cruises such as Mr. Bonthron carried out, and it may be hoped that his book will be the means of inducing many to make acquaintance with the inland waterways of Great Britain.

# HOLIDAYS ON INLAND WATERWAYS

*Scottish Geographical Magazine,* June, 1916.

. . . this informative and handy book.

*Evening News,* March 11, 1916.

A very admirable guide book to the canals and rivers of Great Britain. This is emphatically a book to buy now, and to keep on a handy shelf ready for better times when real holidays and lights hearts shall be—we trust—restored to us.

*Evening News* (London), September 15, 1917.

Now that the canal question is once again being raised, it is worth noting that Mr. P. Bonthron's *My Holidays on Inland Waterways* (Murby and Co.) has gone into a second edition.

*Weekly Dispatch,* February 20, 1916.

Once, long ago, when peace was in the land, I used to search maps for unfrequented corners of the country for holiday making. If only P. Bonthron had written his *My Holidays on Inland Waterways* then! Mr. Bonthron has explored practically every waterway in the United Kingdom navigable by motor-boat or skiff, and in unpretentious language he gives us the record of his cruises. The combination of the delights of motor-boating with voyages into realms of absolute peace will, I am sure, prove irresistible after the war to many of the boys who come home to find this guide waiting them.

*Referee,* January 16, 1916.

Of course there are great books to be written about the canals not only of Flanders, but of "this realm, this England." . . . If there are any who are setting about writing books of this sort they will do well to have at hand a really valuable, useful, and suggestive, but curiously provoking volume, *My Holidays on Inland Waterways.* Its author, Mr. P. Bonthron, of the British Motor-Boat Club, has been everywhere and knows everything. . . . Essentially a book to buy, to have, and to consult on ways and means.

*The Scotsman,* January 6, 1916.

Mr. Bonthron's volume will reawaken in many readers pleasant memories of past excursions; it will give others new ideas as to where and how to spend their annual holiday. . . . He sets down his experiences in brief, chatty chapters, whose business-like attention to practical details will commend them to all who may be moved to follow in his track.

*Glasgow Herald,* December 25, 1916.

The delights of canal and river voyaging are charmingly rehearsed in Stevenson's *Inland Voyage,* which, no doubt, has formed the exemplar for many another trip, and its record. What may be one such is *My Holidays on Inland Waterways.* . . . Three chapter titles indicate that Scottish waters also saw his little craft.

# REVIEWS

*Publishers' Circular,* March 11, 1916.

A book for boating men and anglers and all who enjoy exploring off the beaten track.

*Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette,* March 18, 1916.

It seems that Mr. Bonthron's book is all that would be required as guide to any who should follow in his wake. It is in fact a perfect Vade Mecum for all who would go a-canalling on the inland waterways of Great Britain. The author is fertile of helpful suggestions.

*Bexhill Chronicle,* April 8, 1916.

Mr. P. Bonthron writes with enthusiasm of his 2,000 miles cruising round the canals and rivers of Great Britain.

*Timber Trades Journal,* April 15, 1916.

No better guide could be found than Mr. Bonthron, as he gives many valuable wrinkles as to the preparations and equipment necessary for the full enjoyment of such a venture.

*Athenæum,* April 29, 1916.

The author has explored many canals and inland waterways which are unknown to the average river-enthusiast. The book suggests many possible holiday cruises, giving information about hotels, locks, equipment, etc., and describing the country passed through.

*Leven Advertiser,* April 28, 1916.

It is all the more refreshing, then, to turn, in leisure moments, to a book received at the office the other day, *My Holidays on Inland Waterways*, by Mr. P. Bonthron. . . . Altogether, it is a delightful book.

*The Shooting Times,* April 22, 1916.

Altogether it is quite the book for those who are fond of the water, and especially if they happen to delight in travels off the beaten track.

*Boys' Own Paper,* May.

"B.O.P."-ites to whom many of the usual seaside resorts are barred owing to the war, might well turn their attention to the little known canals and small rivers of our country. They cannot have a better guide for the purpose than the volume under review.

*The Traveller's Gazette,* May, 1916.

Many of our readers may be surprised to learn that the writer of this book, in his holiday journeys on the inland waterways of Great Britain, traversed a distance of over 2,000 miles, chiefly at week-ends and Bank Holiday times.

# HOLIDAYS ON INLAND WATERWAYS

*Contemporary Review,* May, 1916.

The inland waterways of Great Britain have hitherto been too little used for holiday and rest purposes, and at the present time, when foreign travel is difficult, many will think of exploring their own land in such brief holidays as are available. For this purpose they will do well to consult Mr. Bonthron's excellent and attractive book. Mr. Bonthron gives us thirty cruises.

*The Richmond and Twickenham Times,* May 6, 1916.

To those who purpose trying the experiment of taking sculling or motor boat trips on the rivers or canals explored by the author, the book can be recommended as an excellent guide; but even to follow the author in imagination and with the aid of his book is a source of pure pleasure.

*Scots Pictorial,* May 20, 1916.

The man in search of information as to how best and most comfortably to realise the enjoyments and beauties of boating " far from the madding crowd " will find in this work an interesting and most useful guide. A special feature of many of the trips narrated is found in the fact that they were really pioneer excursions in motor boating, and thus a guide and incentive to others.

*Illustrated London News,* May 20, 1916.

It is a book which will appeal strongly to the boating fraternity, and those who are in need of a restful and unconventional holiday.

*Scottish Field,* June, 1916.

Travelling through Great Britain by means of its canals and waterways is a unique and interesting mode of spending a holiday. As this volume points out, it brings one into many unfamiliar scenes, and offers the opportunity of exploring quaint and lovely spots never noticed in guide-books.

*Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News,* June 3, 1916.

When boating is restricted to one locality throughout the summer, the pastime is apt to become monotonous, and any information of new waters is therefore particularly welcome at this juncture. In *My Holidays on Inland Waterways* Mr. P. Bonthron gives an interesting account of his wanderings over some two thousand miles of inland waterways in the United Kingdom.

*Northern Whig,* June 3, 1916.

A meeting of the Belfast Linen Hall Library Governors was held at the Linen Hall Library on Thursday. The following works of general literature were ordered :—Bonthron (P.), *My Holidays on Inland Waterways.* . . .

# REVIEWS

*The Surrey Comet,* June 22, 1916.

In the volume under notice the accounts of these cruises are brought together in handy form, with numerous excellent illustrations, the whole get-up of the book reflecting great credit on the publishers. A glance at the large map, which is one of the features, shows how extended have been Mr. Bonthron's travels, and that it is possible to travel practically all over England by water.

*Commercial Review,* July, 1916.

Mr. Bonthron is an experienced motor-boat enthusiast, and in this interesting, well-written, and well-illustrated book, he describes his experiences of covering 2,000 miles by motor-boat and pleasure skiff.

*Pall Mall Gazette,* July 27, 1916.

It is sad to think of the great waste of inland waterways in this country. England is naturally well watered, and artifice has joined up her rivers so that it is possible to voyage through most parts of the country on these comparatively deserted highways. . . . Mr. Bonthron's delightful cruises had no economic purpose. They were purely for pleasure. . . . If any of Mr. Bonthron's readers desire to imitate his venture they had better carefully study the advice he gives.

*Morning Advertiser,* September 6, 1917.

This book gives an account of 2,000 miles cruising by motor-boat and pleasure skiff on the canals and rivers of this country, and makes pleasant holiday reading.

*Eastern Morning News,* September 6, 1917.

The volume is profusely illustrated, there being 70 views taken on the respective routes as well as a map of our inland waterways. These enhance the value of the book, which bids fair to become a popular standard work on the subject.

*The Motor,* September 11, 1917.

The book bids fair to become a popular standard work on the subject.

*Reading Mercury,* September 16, 1916.

The inland waterways of England are still largely undiscovered by the pleasure seeker, and, therefore, there will be all the greater welcome to Mr. Bonthron's book. . . . Doubtless most people would be unable to follow the ambitious programme sketched out by Mr. Bonthron, but there are opportunities for such exploration in all parts of England, and the writer's gossipy narrative and practical information will be extremely useful.

# HOLIDAYS ON INLAND WATERWAYS

*The Star,* October 30, 1916.

We have read with pleasure Mr. P. Bonthron's account of two thousand miles of canal exploration by motor boat and pleasure skiff. . . . Its itineraries are eminently practical and complete.

*Sporting Life,* December 28, 1916.

The path lies almost unbeaten, but for this pioneer and his friends, by whose labours later comers may profit, to get more readily at the fruit and rid of the encumbering husk.

*The Sportsman,* December 29, 1916.

Britishers do not know their Britain, and one means of becoming more thoroughly acquainted with the country is to follow the example of Mr. Bonthron.

*Morning Advertiser,* February 14, 1917.

The book is divided into thirty cruises, ranging from the Thames to the Forth and Clyde Canal, and offers something sufficiently new to interest the most blasé holiday-maker. . . . The story is so full of interest, and deals with such varied and novel conditions of life and scenery, that the reader will feel a strong desire to go and do likewise.

*Bristol Times,* February 17, 1917.

When we get back to normal times and can think about happy holidays more men might like to try the inland waterways as a change. I make the suggestion after reading some of the chapters in a book which Mr. P. Bonthron has written. He calls it *My Holidays on Inland Waterways,* and in pleasant fashion describes his cruises.

*Railway Magazine,* March, 1917.

An interesting record. . . .

*Graphic* (Weekly) March 3, 1917.

The control of the canals by the Government for the period of war lends peculiar interest to this book, which treats of our inland waterways from the point of view of the traveller who navigates them in motor-boat or pleasure skiff.

*British Weekly,* March 24, 1917.

*My Holidays on Inland Waterways* will fascinate lovers of varying scenery and explorers at heart.